

STATE

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November 2012

MAGAZINE

Restoring Paradise

CSO Mediators Tackle
Gang Violence in Belize

Dignified Homecoming

U.S. Leaders Honor Fallen
Department Employees



Department Offices Engage Unique Audiences
through Online and Alumni Connections

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On the Cover

Graphic illustration by David L. Johnston

Post One

BY ISAAC D. PACHECO

Leveraging Networks

In communication parlance, critical mass refers to the moment when a particular network expands to the point that it becomes self-sustaining, continuing to grow without needing additional external input. In sociological terms, critical mass has also been referred to as the tipping point, wherein an idea or movement rapidly gains traction among a broad audience following a period of gradual growth.

For an idea to reach critical mass, a certain number of innovative, well-connected people must first adopt and retransmit it. These “thought leaders” are highly sought after by public and private sector communicators for their ability to sway public opinion and generate momentum for products and campaigns.

State Department posts and offices have, for years, employed a variety of traditional communication outlets to engage thought leaders in their networks, to promote messages and agendas to a broader audience. Unfortunately, these outreach methods have sometimes proved excessively laborious, consuming considerable amounts of time and resources.

The advent of social media significantly reduced the costs associated with high-speed, large-scale outreach programs, and they have correspondingly become the Department’s go-to networking tools for important issues. The Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) has taken a leading role in training and supporting offices and posts that seek to leverage these digital resources, and the results have been stunning.

The bureau recently led the 20/100 Social Media Challenge aimed at increasing the social media fan bases of 20 posts by 100 percent in only eight months (pg. 30). During the initiative, the IIP team helped several posts far exceed their goals—Embassy Algiers increased its social media presence by 1,300 percent, and Embassy New Delhi, created a



Facebook page from scratch that generated 100,000 followers in only six months.

While social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook have certainly earned their top billing as essential networking tools, they have not obviated the need for interpersonal communication. Recognizing the continued importance of person-to-person relationships, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ (ECA) Alumni Affairs Division works with posts overseas to help them stay connected with former exchange program participants (pg. 32).

The division’s regional coordinators use a combination of social media and traditional outreach tools to develop alumni programs that keep a growing alumni network plugged in to the bureau’s strategic goals. These alumni inform policy and continue to make valuable contributions in their communities long after leaving ECA exchange programs.

By tapping into the power of networks, IIP and ECA are succeeding in generating the critical mass needed to move Department initiatives past niche audiences and into the mainstream where they can gain momentum and flourish. ■

Corrections

October 2012, pg. 4 – The *In the News* article and photo caption should have identified the Navy officer saluting the Peleliu Battlefield Memorial as Admiral Cecil Haney, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet.



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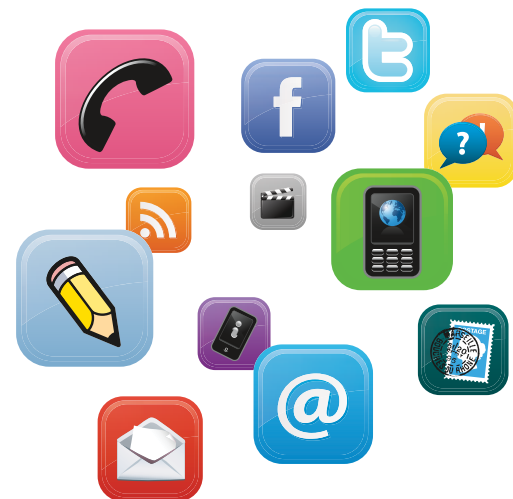
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"Wait, What Did You Just Say?" Revisited

State Magazine received an extraordinary amount of feedback on our July/August issue's *Diversity Notes* column by Office of Civil Rights Director John Robinson. Many of our readers expressed concern that some of the phrases the article highlighted as being potentially offensive may not actually have offensive etymological roots. Others argued that even terms with potentially offensive origins are context-specific, and should not be broadly categorized as taboo if they are not offensive to every audience.

We appreciate this feedback, and wanted to give Robinson an opportunity to elaborate on his column, as well as to clarify the Department's position on the importance of paying attention to the way employees communicate with those around them.

Given the negative reactions we received to the column, "Wait, What Did You Just Say?" I thought it was important to respond directly.

Let me say emphatically that the purpose of the column was

not to curtail free speech or enfranchise political correctness. Employees should not take a vow of silence to avoid offending someone. The broader point was that, in the workplace, it is important to be mindful of the ways that words and actions affect others.

It takes practice to detect signs of discomfort. When employees notice that certain language or behaviors make others squeamish, they should ask if that is indeed the case or simply discontinue the behavior. Department policies do not require individuals to confront the offender verbally or in writing. Body language, avoidance or messages transmitted through others is adequate indication that behavior is unwelcome.

The point is not to stop talking outside of specific work-related conversation. Simply be aware that your words have meaning and, at times, that meaning can be offensive to your colleagues.

John Robinson

Director, Office of Civil Rights

State Magazine Wants to Tell Your Success Stories!

We need fully-formed feature articles that delve into the details on:

- Posts' successful projects/outreach efforts,
- Bureau and offices' new initiatives, and
- Retiree's unique undertakings.

Send your proposals to *State Magazine* Deputy Editor Ed Warner at warneres@state.gov. Submission guidelines available at www.state.gov/statemag.



In the News

DSS Teams Up to Honor 9/11 Victims

Most of the players had only met that morning, but an ad-hoc Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) rugby team managed to beat an established New York Police Department team in their first match at the 2012 Liberty Cup memorial law enforcement rugby tournament in New York City, Aug. 25.

"We had a great core of guys here who knew how to play the game," said Special Agent Guillermo Morales. "When you bring that level of skill to the field, it makes up for a lot."

DSS was beaten later by teams from the U.S. Army and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, but it was all for a good cause. "This tournament honors the people we lost on 9/11 and the people we've lost in the war on terror, including four DSS agents and other State Department personnel," Morales said.

Tournament fees supported a charity that distributes heroism awards to first responders. The DSS team also played for a scholarship fund honoring two 9/11 victims who were alumni of New York City's Xavier High School athletic program. Morales wore his first rugby uniform at Xavier and knew the fallen players.

Morales' co-captain, Special Agent Bill Wommack, assistant special agent in charge of the DSS Boston Field Office, first played rugby as a Marine Security Guard at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva. Since then, he has joined teams while serving in Kuwait, Spain and Argentina.

"Wherever you play, you see the same camaraderie," he said. "It's a barbaric sport played by gentlemen."

Wommack and Morales served together at the U.S. Consulate General in Lahore and played with local ruggers. "In Pakistan, we kicked around the idea of how many DSS players there might be and if we might put a team together," Wommack said.

For Morales, the Liberty Cup was the perfect launch for a DSS team. As many as 50 people expressed interest, but they spanned the globe. "Bill and I scraped together enough hard-nosed folks who were in the area," Morales said. The DSS Special Agents Association provided uniforms.

Morales hopes to expand the DSS team to a Department-wide team. "I know there are a lot of Foreign Service officers who play the game," he said, welcoming volunteers.



The DSS rugby team, right, scrums with ruggers from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. In a scrum, eight players from each side lock horns and maneuver the ball with their feet until one side wins possession.

Photo by Kevin Casey



Race Invigorates Environmental Movement

Seven months of work and ideas, along with media, corporate, volunteer and community support, led to the launch of Nicaragua's biggest ever environmental foot race and festival. The U.S. Embassy in Managua helped organize the May 13 inaugural "Green Race," a 5-kilometer event involving more than 2,500 runners, to raise environmental awareness and help Nicaraguans preserve their natural resources.

The embassy brought Nicaraguan environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) together with corporations that had money to fund the race. Thirty-six local companies provided more than \$100,000 in funding, contacts, technology, design expertise and communication support.

The event was held at the city's fairgrounds, where the tents of environmentally friendly sponsors provided educational materials. Some 400 volunteers from universities, NGOs, high schools, the Peace Corps, other diplomatic missions and the embassy served at water stations, the finish line and the stage for the post-race concert.

Even U.S. Ambassador Phyllis Powers joined in on the event as a runner. Former Nicaraguan Environment Minister Dr. Jaime Incer joined her at the starting line and fired the starter's gun. When the ambassador crossed the finish line, she joined Dr. Incer and the ambassadors of Germany, Colombia and El Salvador in giving each of the 1,500 registered participants a medal made of sustainable wood.

The post-race concert at the fairgrounds adjacent to the racecourse featured many of Nicaragua's biggest musical acts. Ambassador Powers and ultra-marathoner Josue Stephens announced a donation to Nicaraguans of 400 pairs of new running shoes, valued at \$40,000, from U.S. sports organizations.

Media coverage of the race reached millions in Nicaragua. A social media campaign hosted through the "I Don't Throw Trash" Alliance of environmental NGOs and diplomatic missions broadcast nearly 1,000 race, festival and concert photos to 5,600 Facebook fans on race day.

The "I Don't Throw Trash" anti-litter campaign sticker now appears on thousands of cars and personal items across Nicaragua.

In June, race organizers took environmentalism a step further by helping reforest a 1,000-acre nature reserve and watershed that environmental leaders hope will become Nicaragua's exemplar for sustainable forest management. At least 400 corporate, NGO, university and diplomatic volunteers worked toward the Green Race goal of planting 6,000 trees.

"With projects like this," Ambassador Powers said, "Nicaragua's citizens are working for a better environmental future and the U.S. Embassy stands firmly beside them."



The inaugural Green Race in Nicaragua attracted more than 2,500 runners and walkers to the 5-kilometer course.

Photos by Willy Castillo

News

Disability Recruitment Program Sets Record

In 2012, the Department dramatically increased participation in its Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), an internship program for college students with disabilities, by hiring six students, compared with one in 2011. The interns worked in the bureaus of Diplomatic Security, Overseas Buildings Operations and Human Resources.

The WRP aims to provide interns with work experience in a supportive environment that could lead to full-time employment. Participants gain federal government work experience, and managers are able to see the contributions people with disabilities can bring to the workforce. A government-wide program, WRP provides federal agencies annually with pre-screened, motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities.

HR's Office of Employee Relations' Disability Reasonable Accommodation Division (HR/ER/DRAD), which leads the Department's efforts to recruit, hire and retain persons with disabilities, funds the Department's WRP internships. WRP intern William Lewallen said his internship was a life-changing experience. "The internship gave me an up-close-and-personal look at the internal functions of the Department, and has further enticed my aspirations to become a Foreign Service officer," he said. "Through the program's streamlined processes and the staff's accommodating

expertise with disabled individuals, I have quite comfortably found a program that seeks as much out of me as I do of the program."

Managers also see value in the WRP. Ron Cruz, Lewallen's supervisor and chief of HR's Conduct, Suitability and Discipline Division, said that because his office has a perpetual need for resources, "it was an obvious win-win move to provide a meaningful opportunity for William to make an impact here in our division while also helping to promote career and internship opportunities for people with disabilities here at the State Department." For more information on WRP, contact DRAD at [SelectivePlacement@state.gov](mailto>SelectivePlacement@state.gov).



WRP intern William Lewallen, left, discusses an Employee Relations assignment with his supervisor, Ron Cruz.
Photo by Michael Wolfe

New Web Applications Serve Customers Better

To provide Department employees with a more efficient and convenient means of completing human resource-related processes, the Bureau of Human Resources (HR) plans to introduce four online applications. The new applications include: eAwards, the Automated Classification and Recruitment Solution (ACRS), the Overseas Personnel System (OPS) and the Department of State direct-hire-based Online Staffing Pattern.

The first phase of the automated awards process, eAwards, arrived in early 2011, and it is planned for expansion to overseas posts. The application allows direct-hire employees' nominations for the Extra Mile, Time Off, Franklin, Meritorious Honor and Superior Honor awards to be submitted online. To date, a total of 1,260 awards have been processed using the online tool.

ACRS, created in 2010 to house a database of Position Descriptions (PDs), allows for the creation and classification

of PDs, and initiation and processing of Position Action Requests. The searchable and editable database includes standardized PDs that are already classified, potentially eliminating weeks of the classification process. ACRS is used by HR and the bureaus of Diplomatic Security and International Security and Arms Control, and will be further deployed this fall and fully implemented in 2013. At that point it will include approved Civil Service and Foreign Service PDs, and provide a recruitment and staffing workflow process for all Civil Service positions. A total of 9,279 PDs can be viewed in ACRS, 895 of them created and approved by user participants and 8,384 of which were scanned and verified for quality by HR.

Also to deploy this fall, OPS will replace the legacy Web.PASS Post Personnel System with a centralized solution having upgraded capabilities. These features include a single sign-on with tighter security controls,

standardized reference table data and real-time updates for overseas personnel actions, processes and reports.

Bureau and posts in this summer's pilot test of the direct-hire-based Online Staffing Pattern were provided with real-time online access to Staffing Pattern reports, including all current information that Human Resource officers usually view on CD-ROMs. The test ended in September 2012, and recipients now have access to the Online Staffing Pattern reports based on their role and position. There are provisions for users to request access for delegation of their role.

"The goal of these applications is to simplify and streamline employees' work processes and reduce administrative burdens," said HR Executive Director William E. Schaal Jr. "We are looking forward to participants' comments and feedback to further enhance these applications." ■

Diversity Notes

BY JOHN M. ROBINSON
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

What Is a Minority? Let Us Count the Ways

My baby boomer-era birth certificate issued in Macon County, Ala., welcomed me into the world as a “Colored” child. This term was used in the United States from the colonial period through the Civil War to describe African slaves and their children. After the Civil War, the term defined large segments of the population by what they were not, that is to say not White.

By grade school I had become “Negro,” a term of Latin origin used by Portuguese and Spanish traders to describe people from Sub-Saharan Africa. The American variant of Negro was a legal status defined by Southern states strictly according to the percentage of one’s Black African blood. In South Carolina, for example, if your ancestry included 1/32nd of African blood, you were not mixed or hybrid; you were certified 100 percent Negro for voting—or not voting—and other purposes.

I progressed further in high school to become “Afro-American,” or just plain “Black,” if I preferred; then on to college as “African American.” So, finally, I was on the same footing as Irish Americans and Italian Americans. Fast forward to 2012: Now my grandson tells me we are to be called “people of color,” which sounds almost like being Colored again. Oh well.

There are other examples where references and usage have changed over time. Hispanic/Latino changed from a racial category to an ethnicity in order to reflect the varying races of people who are Hispanic/Latino. People of Asian descent were first included in the U.S. Census as “Chinese.” Later, census questions allowed Asian Americans to distinguish between “Chinese” and “Japanese;” subsequently, they could report more detailed race information, such as “Korean” or “Filipino;” and, as of 1990, could distinguish their Asian ancestry by country, or as a “Native Hawaiian” or “Pacific Islander.”

Racial divisions have been front and center in America’s political and social landscape since the United States’ inception. The 3/5th Compromise allowed the Constitution to pass. The Civil War and the issue of slavery almost dissolved the Union. Currently, biologists and geneticists tell us the differences that we see as race, i.e., skin color and facial features, resulted from geographic adaptation from a common genetic code. But make no mistake, how Americans perceive racial categories and the social significance we attach to those divisions are fundamentally important to the character of America, our history and our current social/political landscape.

Until the landmark Supreme Court decisions banning segregation and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, racial divisions were barriers to people of color in certain kinds of employment, including the



Civil Service and Foreign Service. Now, the Department complies with laws, Executive Orders and Management Directives that require it to monitor and report the gender, ethnic and racial diversity of its employee population, applicant pool, leadership training participants and promotion and award recipients to ensure that employment is open to all. The ethnic and racial categories that the Department reports annually to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the Management Directive 715 report are: Hispanic or Latino, White, Black or African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native and Two or More Races. Disability is reported separately from ethnicity, race and gender. Note that since 2003 one can indicate multi-ethnic, multi-racial ancestry.

Have you ever wondered how you are recorded in the Department of State’s database? Visit GEMS Self Service through HR Online and click on the Employee Self Service tab.

We look forward to a day when equity, fairness and inclusion in our country will no longer make it necessary to count the ways to identify people of various colors or scrutinize employee and applicant demographics. However, until there is no longer a reason to count, the Office of Civil Rights, in concert with the Bureau of Human Resources, will continue to comply with government reporting requirements. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson".

Direct from the D.G.

BY LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Saluting and Supporting Our Locally Employed Staff

Let me take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving holiday. I am truly grateful for your ongoing support and commitment. I especially want to thank the nearly 45,000 State Department Locally Employed (LE) Staff members who faithfully serve our nation every day, benefiting our missions and citizens.

For example, when I was Ambassador in Monrovia, Liberia, Jenkins Vangehn helped us appreciate the intricacies of Liberian politics, providing valuable insight beneath the formal structure of a constitutional democracy into the complex web of history, family relationships, clan loyalties and rivalries. This gave us a better understanding of events leading up to the general elections in 2011.

Extraordinary circumstances sometimes provide an opportunity to show how much our LE Staff can do. For instance, Joyce Dixon of Embassy Malta worked tirelessly during the evacuation from neighboring Libya to provide financial services to American employees and U.S. envoys and Disaster Relief teams during the conflict. And during the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, Kyong Sook Lee worked virtually nonstop, juggling complex schedules with shifting flight arrival times, to support the more than 100 incoming White House staff.

LE Staff members guide and develop our new Foreign Service employees, and advise us all. At Embassy Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Jose Bationo is the cornerstone financial management resource for first- and second-tour Management Officers and has improved internal controls in cashier operations in this cash-economy post.

My HR colleagues and I continue to develop ways to better utilize the diverse talents of our dedicated LE Staff. Our Office of Overseas Employment, for example, is this year “standing up” the LE Staff Global Executive Corps by launching a SharePoint site that compiles each regional bureau’s LE Staff Executive Corps members into one searchable database. With the permission of their post and home bureau, the 117 LE Staff currently listed are available for worldwide deployment. The database can be searched and sorted by key fields, to identify individuals with needed skills in crises and to fill critical ad hoc staffing gaps anywhere.

In addition, I am pleased to note that FSI’s recently announced new course, “FSN Leadership” (RP-401), will empower Foreign Service National employees to build and maintain productive relationships in their workplace. Participants will gain insights in the application of interpersonal skills to achieve mission goals.



“FSN Leadership” is a five-day classroom course or a 14-week online course. You can find out more by referring to ALDAC 12 State 89209.

In 2011, FSI also created 12 LE Staff adjunct faculty positions, two from each geographic region, to deliver the LE Staff Supervisory Skills course (PA-248) at posts overseas. During 2011, these adjunct faculty trained more than 550 FSNs at posts overseas. This successful program is continuing to grow; this year, we will add at least eight additional LE Staff Adjunct Faculty members to teach this course.

We in HR want to better respond to the needs of our LE Staff colleagues, so we are modernizing our LE staff compensation process to ensure that we are competitive with local labor markets once the pay freeze has been lifted. Finally, we have made a good deal of progress on the Alternate Retirement Plan that, in addition to requiring employer and employee contributions, will allow LE staff to make additional voluntary contributions to a retirement savings plan.

Events of recent weeks have underscored just how important a role our LE Staff play. If you have any ideas about how we can better serve our LE colleagues, please send them to me via unclassified email at dgdirect@state.gov. I look forward to hearing from you. ■

Linda Thomas-Greenfield



Solemn Homecoming

Remembering Our Fallen Colleagues

Story and photos by Isaac D. Pacheco





President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, UN Ambassador Susan Rice, former Secretary of State Colin Powell and Senators John Kerry and John McCain were among the dignitaries present for a ceremony at Joint Base Andrews Sept. 14 that honored the four Americans killed in an attack on the American Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, Sept. 11.

Hundreds of State Department employees packed a hangar to witness the dignified transfer of the remains of the Honorable J. Christopher Stevens, U.S. Ambassador to Libya; Sean Smith, an Air Force veteran working as a State Department information management specialist; and Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods, both former Navy SEALs serving in protective security roles at the consulate.

"This has been a difficult week for the State Department and for our country," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the gathering. "There will be more difficult days ahead, but it is important that we don't lose sight of the fundamental fact that America must keep leading the world. We owe it to those four men to continue the long, hard work of diplomacy.

"I am enormously proud of the men and women of the State Department. I'm proud of all those across our government, civilian and military alike, who represent America abroad. They help make the United States the greatest force for peace, progress, and human dignity the world has ever known. If the last few days teach us anything, let it be this: That this work, and the men and women who risk their lives to do it, are at the heart of what makes America great and good."

President Obama then spoke, providing background on each of the four Americans, offering his sympathy to their families and promising that the United States would not let this heinous act diminish its important diplomatic mission.

"The United States of America will never retreat from the world. We will never stop working for the dignity and freedom that every [person] deserves. ... That's the essence of American leadership. ... That was their work in Benghazi, and that is the work we will carry on," said President Obama. "The flag they served under now carries them home. May God bless the memories of these men who laid down their lives for us all."



Clockwise from above: A joint service cordon stands watch during the dignified transfer ceremony; President Obama delivers his remarks to a crowd of State Department employees and the families of the fallen men; An Air Force captain prepares to hand over American flags to a Mortuary Affairs detail. **Opposite page:** Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks about each of her four fallen colleagues during the somber ceremony inside an aircraft hangar at Joint Base Andrews.



‘A Lot of Joy’

An Ambassador's Peace Corps Years Recalled

By Sam Werberg, deputy cultural affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Rabat

The Lycee Tarik Ben Ziad, a Moroccan high school, is located on a tree-lined, sloping street in Azrou, a beautiful mountain town in the Middle Atlas range. It is here that Ambassador Chris Stevens, who was killed along with three other Americans in a September attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, first arrived for training as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in June 1983.

Dr. Ali Azeriah, one of Stevens' language teachers during the training and now a professor at Al-Akawayn University, remembers him fondly. "He was an excellent student of Arabic with an exquisite sense of humor," Azeriah said. "He spoke beautiful Moroccan Arabic."

Valerie Staats, one of 84 new volunteers who arrived with Stevens that summer and now is the Peace Corps country director in Sierra Leone, remembers him as the "tall, blond kid ... with the unfailing old-school courtesy toward all."

According to Azzedine Downes, a PCV and one of Stevens' trainers, "It was clear that he was special from the very beginning simply because of his warmth and sincerity. He was good at languages and teaching, but

it was his charisma and leadership qualities that made him stick out."

By summer's end, Stevens had successfully completed his training, earning excellent marks in spoken Arabic, and was ready to begin his service. He was assigned as an English teacher at a high school in Ouaouizerth, a small, picturesque town 245 kilometers south of Azrou toward Marrakech. In his two years there, he taught English to more than 270 Moroccan students and established a library of English-language books.

Stevens' impact in this small community was felt well beyond the students he taught. Other faculty members, students who were not taught by him directly, those who used the library he created and people in the community were all touched by this enthusiastic American with the infectious smile.

Amie Bishop, a PCV posted to a nearby village, recalled that "he had a lot of joy about being where he was and wanting to learn everything he could about Moroccan culture and language. And people felt that. He didn't come with any judgment."

During the 1984 summer break between his two years of teaching, Stevens spent some time at the American Legation Museum in Tangiers, working with other volunteers to reorganize the museum's library collection. The library has been used over the years by Americans, Moroccans and others researching the greater Maghreb area.

Even early on in his international career, Stevens was already thinking about his future. According to Staats, "Chris always said he wanted to be an ambassador, and we didn't doubt him. Thanks to the Internet, we could keep in touch, and so we were all very proud when he was appointed special envoy and, later, U.S. ambassador. And we teased him, truthfully, that he hadn't changed one bit since our PCV days almost 30 years ago."



Those who followed Stevens' international career from his start as a PCV to his job as ambassador saw how this early experience shaped him. Bill Lawrence, whose PCV tour overlapped briefly with Stevens' in Morocco, served with Stevens' later as a Foreign Service officer on TDY in Tripoli, and worked with him most recently through the International Crisis Group.

"Chris Stevens represented the very best of the Peace Corps," Lawrence said. "He was inquisitive, culturally adept and warm-hearted with everyone he met. Diplomats and average citizens in the countries he served loved how he spoke with a candor and sincerity that not all U.S. officials achieve. Chris learned how to talk to local people in their own dialect in the Peace Corps, and as an ambassador never lost his touch."

Abderrahim Tبنى, a Moroccan friend of Stevens who later became a Peace Corps language instructor and had a tremendous impact on many Morocco PCVs (including me), said he considered Chris as a brother.

"In his second year in Ouaouizerth, Chris and I shared a house," Tبنى recalled. "This experience enabled me to learn more from him and gave me a chance to know him more, as well as to admire what the Peace Corps does in developing countries. To feel all this closely, I became a Peace Corps trainer and never missed a summer training except the one in 1987 when I went to visit Chris in California." Stevens also visited Tبنى in Casablanca and met his wife and son.

"Just days before we lost him," Tبنى recalled, "Chris sent a touching message to my son offering condolences on the recent loss of my mother. It is just so shocking to us to lose him and be deprived of an American friend who loved my country and respected my culture."

Bishop said the State Department "needs more people like Chris—people who are culturally competent, linguistically fluent, who are willing to engage. Because if you don't find the balance, then you become out of touch and you become isolated. And I think Chris knew that and he fought against that."

Staats summed him up thus: "Chris devoted his career, and life, to improving relations between the Arabic/Islamic world and the West."

Since 1963, more than 4,400 PCVs have served in Morocco. Stevens' legacy lives on there today in the memories of Moroccans and friends from Peace Corps days, and in the spirit of the more than 200 current PCVs in Morocco who carry on his legacy.

Editor's Note: The author was a PCV in Fes, Morocco, from 1997 to 2000. He wishes to thank all the former volunteers, Moroccan friends and others who shared their thoughts, and encourages anyone who wishes to share thoughts and remembrances to visit www.RememberingChrisStevens.com. ■

Opposite page: Stevens, left, takes a break from a hike in California with visiting Moroccan friend Abderrahim Tبنى. **Above:** Abderrahim Tبنى and Stevens walk along a Moroccan road. **Right:** Stevens takes a photography break in Morocco.

Photo by Amie Bishop



On Guard Still

Former 'Coasties' now
serve State Department

By Ed Warner



During his 2007 deployment, Jim Davidson examines produce at a Baghdad market.

Photo by James Cleveland

The missions of the U.S. Coast Guard and State Department overlap in such areas as preventing drugs from reaching the United States, and the two also often work in concert in other ways, such as when the Department authorizes Coast Guardsmen to board a foreign vessel.

There's one other important way the two organizations intersect: A number of former and Reserve members of the Coast Guard serve at the State Department, often in positions that use leadership skills they gained while on active duty.

James "Jim" Davidson, formerly information management officer at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, spent 15 years in the Coast Guard Reserve, stationed in such locations as Panama, Puerto Rico and Key West, where he worked with the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Then, in 1994, he joined the Foreign Service and found, when posted to the Dominican Republic from 1997 to 2001, he had "endless Coast Guard duties." He was even recalled to active duty, shortly after arrival, to assist with Operation Frontier Shield's battle with seaborne narco-traffickers.

While in the Dominican Republic, he helped the Coast Guard build a base from which the fast, drug-laden boats approaching the coast of Hispaniola at the end of their 800-mile journey from Colombia would be met by the Coast Guard's own fast interceptor boats. In 1998, when Santo Domingo was hit by Hurricane Georges and the embassy and many residences were damaged, the chief of mission got him assigned to active duty again, to work at the Dominican military airport coordinating helicopter and fixed-wing relief flights, he recalled.

Davidson continued Coast Guard duty in his next posting to Muscat, Oman, arriving a few days before Sept. 11, 2001. While standing on a Muscat pier preparing to greet a U.S. Navy cruiser and submarine on behalf of the Department, he saw a Navy machine-gunner on the cruiser nervously tracking him with his weapon.

"Perhaps the crew didn't know what to make of a Coastie in the Gulf of Oman meeting their ship," he surmised.

Back in Latin America in 2004, Davidson worked with the Coast Guard attaché in Quito, Ecuador, on such missions as Navy and Coast Guard port calls at a large South American seaport. Though he was the embassy's information management officer, he'd spend weekends or "short periods of inactive duty" on Coast Guard assignments. When a cutter visited the port, he said he'd fly to the coast from Quito and meet with security and logistics people before the visit.

"When the cutter arrived in the morning," he said, "we would have fuel trucks, telecommunications, money, food and other supplies there to meet them."

He'd brief the commander and crew about security and bring in the tourism and logistics experts. When the cutter departed two or three days later, he'd fly back to Quito.

He also aided U.S. ships' crew members who were being medically evacuated. Once, a crewmember with a broken foot was being lifted by his partner when the partner slipped on the ship's gangway, breaking his own ankle. "I took both to the local hospital, where we spent six hours. It was one of the injured crewmember's birthday," Davidson recalled.

A downside of being a Coastie might be that one can suddenly be recalled to active duty, as Davidson was again in 2006, when he was sent to Baghdad. He served at the U.S. Embassy as military special assistant to the Homeland Security Country Director for six months. After a subsequent assignment at Coast Guard Headquarters, he retired from the Coast Guard in 2010 after 31 years of service.

Davidson said the Coast Guard "taught me leadership early." Since it is small compared to other U.S. military services, the Coast Guard lets its members "supervise, command and mentor others sooner," he said. "Small cutters are often commanded by senior enlisted or junior officer personnel." At the State Department, Davidson said he promotes teamwork—as if he were on a small boat—and listens to teammates before making decisions.

He said some Department meetings “seemed unorganized, often went off on tangents or lasted much longer than scheduled.” Lately, he continued, more people understand they should announce the reason for meetings beforehand, provide agendas by e-mail, follow the agendas and assign tasks and list accomplishments when the meeting ends.

“Now, that is progress,” he enthused.

Anthony Clare, a Bureau of Consular Affairs analyst, served six years in the Coast Guard and remembers an incident where his prior service intersected with his Department of State career. As a junior enlisted deck seaman on the cutter *Alert* on counternarcotics patrol in the Caribbean in the late 1980s, “we would encounter non-U.S.-flagged vessels that we wanted to board, but that required authorizations from Washington.” The *Alert*, he said, would shadow such vessels, sometimes for hours, awaiting State Department approval.

“It was rather frustrating because we wanted to board that vessel and see what we could find,” he said. “Plus it often meant delaying port calls or keeping us in heavy seas” in the Windward Passage between Cuba and Hispaniola. “Though we always complained about them taking so long, the State Department usually came through and we got authorization to board the suspect vessels. I wasn’t an officer, I had one of the lowest-level jobs in the Coast Guard and I had no idea that I’d ever work for State. However, I vividly remember being in awe whenever the State Department got involved.”

The boat shoe was on the other foot in 2001, though, when as a new Ops Center watch officer, “we would put together calls between the USCG, State and others for some Coast Guard cutter conducting a boarding somewhere. It always took me back to [my time] standing on a deck getting wet or cooking in the sun waiting on the State Department,” Clare said.

Wilbur Velarde served on active Coast Guard duty from 1998 to 2004. Aboard the *Courageous* out of Panama City, Fla., he served as operations officer, coordinating operational planning and mission execution for the 210-foot cutter, coordinating the operations of its 14 officers and 80-plus enlisted sailors, and managing his department’s budget. He was later a watch supervisor in a Coast Guard office that managed vessel traffic in the Houston-Galveston area, aiming to prevent collisions and groundings.

He joined the State Department in 2008 and has moved from a posting as a consular officer and deputy fraud prevention manager in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to Hamburg, Germany, where he’s management officer and post security officer. He said he brought with him an attitude to lead by serving those under his charge.

Treat all your people with dignity and respect while remaining focused on the mission, he advises.

Life at State and in the Coast Guard have in common the relocation associated with new tours of duty, he said. The Department should offer better training “for entry-level officers placed in positions above their grade” and more informal and formal leadership training, he added.

Velarde is now a commander in the Coast Guard Reserve, serving at the Department of Defense National Military Command Center, a 24/7 worldwide monitoring and crisis-action-planning operation. Because the U.S. government provides only 15 days per year of military leave, he said he often uses his annual leave to meet the Reserve’s requirement that he spend at least 36 workdays on duty per year.

“[There is] a tremendous amount of balancing between my family, Department of State duties and military obligations,” he said.

Another former Coastie, Peter Ganser, is a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Harare. He said he learned the ways of the Department by serving as Coast Guard advisor at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz in the early 1990s, where he helped build four forward operating bases and worked with SEAL and Coast Guard teams to shut down cocaine labs and interdict traffickers on Bolivia’s waterways. Later in the ’90s, he was assistant director of Operations and Policy for the Coast Guard Commandant, where he said he worked with the Department of State on such maritime matters as the International Ice Patrol, Multi-National Caribbean Training Cutter and Mexico-U.S. combined operations.

One of his most fun assignments, he recalled, was when, as a Coast Guard attorney, he dealt with the intricacies of a ship-boarding case. But in this instance, it wasn’t the Coast Guard seeking to board—Canadian officials had attempted to board a Coast Guard cutter moored on the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Not all Coasties at State are former ones, of course. Many embassies have active-duty Coast Guard officers serving as Coast Guard liaisons, as Barry Compagnoni is doing at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. What may be most unique about Compagnoni’s role at this, one of State’s largest posts, is that he’s the only Coast Guard officer posted to China.

He works with China’s maritime agencies on such Coast Guard objectives as maritime safety and security, and stewardship of the maritime environment. He helps coordinate operations to “improve our ability to conduct maritime search and rescue, enforce laws targeting illegal fishing, improve environmental protection and ensure consistent compliance with international standards for commercial shipping.” ■



From top: Commander Wilbur Velarde wears his Coast Guard uniform proudly. *Coast Guard photo*; Anthony Clare, who served six years in the Coast Guard, is now with the Bureau of Consular Affairs. *Photo by Ed Warner*; Barry Compagnoni is Coast Guard liaison at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. *Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco*

Equality to Security

Department Promotes Women as Agents of Peace

By Jamille Bigio, senior policy advisor, Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues

The United States promotes gender equality worldwide in countries affected by crisis, conflict and transition. "Whether it's ending conflict, managing a transition or rebuilding a country, the world can no longer afford to continue ignoring half the population," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said at the 2011 launch of the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP).

So, for example, when voter registration numbers for Libya's first democratic election showed that many women were not registering, the Department offered to help. A media campaign encouraged all Libyans to participate in the elections. The result: More than 40 percent of the registered voters were women, and women voted in significant numbers during the July elections.

A key objective of the NAP is involving women in conflict resolution. When women are meaningful participants in peace processes and decision-making forums, they can enlarge the scope of agreements and put the focus on issues such as human rights, justice, reconciliation and economic renewal that are critical to sustaining peace.

"Women want a better life for themselves and their country, and they want to be part of the process of creating that," explained

Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verreer. "This is not a favor to women, but necessary to achieve our objectives. For example, Afghanistan will have the best chance for stability when women at all levels—national, provincial and district—have an active role in building civil society and a voice in the political process."

A second objective of the NAP is conflict prevention. When women are empowered, they can help prevent conflicts. Too often, they have knowledge of impending or escalating conflict but no way to report their concerns safely. Diplomatic and programmatic support for women's involvement in community-based early warning and conflict prevention activities are critical.

"We know that women and girls in conflict, crisis and disaster contexts have distinct needs and vulnerabilities, as well as strengths and information, that can be overlooked," said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Conflict and Stabilization Operations Pat Haslach. "This is why we've developed gender guidelines and tools for staff deployed in conflict-affected settings. We need gender considerations to be well integrated into U.S. government-supported conflict prevention and mitigation efforts."

Promoting gender equality furthers the Department's stabilization efforts, as investments in women's employment, health and education correlate with stability, economic growth and development. The World Economic Forum has found a direct correlation between an increase in a country's economic competitiveness and a decrease in gender gaps in health, education and economic and political participation.

"In sub-Saharan Africa, women are the backbone of communities and have the greatest potential to unlock economic growth on the continent, which is linked with gains in peace, prosperity and stability," said Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson.

Women's economic participation and its impact on prosperity and stability is now a pressing issue for global leaders. The Department is identifying policies, reforms, initiatives and partnerships to increase women's economic and political participation and access to education and health opportunities, recognizing that in conflict, crisis and transition environments, women face additional barriers to participation. One way the Department is advancing women entrepreneurs' access to markets, finance, training and networks is through forums such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) implements NAP-oriented efforts such as funding women's political empowerment, enhancing women's access to media, raising awareness and monitoring of women's human rights, and promoting reforms to increase women's legal protection.

A third objective of the NAP is protecting women during and after conflict. Sexual violence is a horrific tactic often employed during armed conflicts. When wars come to an end, high levels of violence and insecurity, widespread impunity and breakdown in the rule of law can contribute to high rates of gender-based violence, which in turn are indicators of a nation's stability, security and propensity toward internal or external conflict.

"Gender inequality and lack of access to justice for women is a major driver of internal conflict, crime, social disruption and poverty," said William R. Brownfield, assistant secretary





Assistant Secretary Anne Richard speaks with a refugee woman in Burkina Faso.

Photo by Meg Riggs

Opposite page: Ambassador Melanne Verwee meets with female peacekeepers in Mongolia. *Photo by Wenchi Yu*

for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). “We are committed to advancing women’s and other vulnerable populations’ access to justice as we promote rule of law through our longstanding relationships with police, prosecutors, corrections officials, judges and civil society.” INL police training programs, for instance, support host countries to hire, train and retain more female and underrepresented law enforcement and judicial officials, and promote fair and equal employment practices for women and minorities.

Another objective of the NAP is to provide women with equal access to international relief and recovery programs. As families’ primary caregivers, women help ensure that relief and recovery assistance addresses the needs of the entire affected population. According to Anne Richard, assistant secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), “Seeing brave women step forward in dangerous places to serve as protection experts, community health workers and midwives, HIV counselors and teachers has made me realize how much strength and resilience women can have even in very challenging circumstances.”

PRM helps refugees, refugee returnees and conflict-affected communities prevent and respond to gender-based violence. For instance, a PRM-funded NGO in Iraq is building the capacity of local NGOs to create and deliver community services for survivors of gender-based violence. It does so through Listening Centers located near internally displaced person (IDP) settlements and open to IDPs, returnees and host community members.

Throughout the world, the Department is integrating women, peace and security into its structure and processes, promoted by the NAP’s final objective.

“The NAP fits squarely with efforts to promote gender equality and advance the status of women and girls across all of the Department’s work, including Embassy Bogotá’s,” said U.S. Ambassador to Colombia P. Michael McKinley. He added that the mission is developing an interagency gender strategy, which recognizes that gender integration, not separate gender programs, is key to U.S. foreign policy and security. “Guided by this strategy and our Inter-Agency Gender Working Group, we will be more effective in supporting the government of Colombia’s goals to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment as necessary for effective, sustainable development outcomes.”

The Foreign Service Institute, with support from the Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues, is finalizing courses and modules on gender equality and Women, Peace and Security for the 2012-2013 course calendar. The United States and its world partners are advancing the participation of women in preventing and resolving conflict. As President Obama remarked at the close of May’s G8 summit, “[W]hen it comes to economic development and when it comes to peace and security issues, empowering women to have a seat at the table and get more engaged and more involved in these processes can be extraordinarily fruitful.”

More information on the NAP is available from SGWI_PA@state.gov. The Department’s website, state.gov, offers links to the NAP and the Department’s implementation plan. Additionally, there are a range of Women, Peace and Security resources on Diplopedia, including USAID’s implementation plan and the Department of Defense implementation guide. ■

Moment of Truce

CSO Mediation Training Stems Gang Violence in Belize

Story by Angelica Martinez, military fellow; Julie Walton, Belize field lead; and Calvin Wilson, senior corrections advisor for the Department of Justice and CSO team member
Photos by U.S. State Department Staff

Belize, with its stunning rain forests, spectacular barrier reef and Mayan ruins, is a tourists' paradise. But by 2011, the government of Belize recognized its paradise could be lost if it did not reverse a rising tide of crime that had turned a once tranquil nation into a country with the world's sixth-highest homicide rate per capita. There were 16 homicides per 100,000 in 2000 and 41 per 100,000 in 2010.

Local gangs, which lure unemployed young men and women in the poor neighborhoods of Belize City, fuel much of the violence. Belize, an English-speaking country with a population of 327,719, has approximately 24 gangs, with memberships ranging from 500 to 700 each. Fearing the situation was spiral-

ing out of control, the government of Belize negotiated a truce in September 2011 with 13 of the most violent gangs. Violence dropped dramatically as the government instituted programs to employ gang members. Unfortunately, by January 2012 the fragile truce began to fray.

To consolidate the truce's early gains, the prime minister's office—through its RE-STORE (Re-Establish Security Through Outreach Rehabilitation and Education) Belize program—requested support from the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan. As part of the Central America Regional Security Initiative, the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) responded. CSO sent conflict-resolution experts to develop a

locally sustainable mediation program to address gang disputes.

"I've never seen a government team deploy so quickly," said U.S. Ambassador Vinai Thummalapally.

At the time, Belize had only two volunteer mediators working to maintain the truce, both of whom needed support. CSO, in conjunction with Embassy Belmopan and RE-STORE Belize, designed a program to train gang mediators and to offer vulnerable groups in South Belize City nonviolent solutions to their disputes. CSO experts taught three mediation and conflict-resolution courses for 36 students from 12 Belizean organizations. The students were from gang intervention facilities, the community police, juvenile services organizations, NGOs and the Belize Central Prison. Several community activists and school counselors also participated.

Students applied what they learned by conducting real-world conflict mediations in their communities. Shadowed by an experienced mediator, students handled disputes among families, between incarcerated gang members at the Belize Central Prison, at facilities for troubled youth and at local high schools. One volunteer mediator, a mother who had lost her son to gang violence, was nervous prior to her first several mediations at the prison, but after successfully resolving her first dispute, she described the program as "life-changing."

Calvin Wilson, a senior corrections advisor for the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, shadowed that volunteer. "It was rewarding to see participants overcome their fears, complete the mediations and feel confident afterward," he said. "Many of the Belizeans we worked with had to confront their own fears before they were able to truly move forward."



A Department of State staff member and a Youth for the Future Violence Reduction officer display an anger management poster.

New mediators were also trained to conduct community dialogues that bring together civil society leaders to explore how the community can draw upon its strengths to build resistance to gangs. The meetings led to plans to provide job training for youth and to create an association of mediators that will promote the spread of this important skill to other communities. As of September, three training sessions and one train-the-trainer course had been held, 36 mediators were trained and 78 disputes mediated.

The mediators committed to conducting 240 hours of mediations over the next 12 months. They also have formed a community of prac-

Right: High school students complete anger management posters. **Below:** Students learn mediation through role playing.



tice to continue extending these services out into the community. With strong support from the prime minister's office, RESTORE Belize plans to increase the number of trained mediators and focus on at-risk youth through providing peer mediation training.

To learn what the experience had been like for participants, CSO team member Bruce Hemmer met with a young man who'd been in mediation with one of his

antagonists and had talked with his antagonist about what had led to the attack and retaliation. "The participant told me he had never really talked like that and that [through mediation] he got closer to the other party, who was a member of a different gang," Hemmer said. The participant said he felt better than before, was able to see things from a different point of view and now realized Belizeans "fight over a lot of minor stuff,

and if this mediation didn't happen, blood was going to be shed."

Belize now has a trained network of mediators and mediator instructors and is building a community dialogue capability so that communities most affected by gangs are better equipped to settle disputes before they escalate into violence.

CSO is a vital part of the U.S. effort to more effectively help prevent conflict and support post-conflict nations with recovery. It works with partner organizations in priority countries to break cycles of violent conflict, strengthen civilian security and mitigate crises, being sensitive to local dynamics and using data-driven analysis. CSO is working in more than 20 countries, including:

- In Turkey, where it provides Syrian civilian opposition groups with the skills, knowledge, networks and equipment to interrupt cycles of violence and shape Syria's political transition;
- Kenya, where it's promoting a peaceful and credible election in 2013 by working with the U.S. Embassy, Kenyan government and civil society organizations on conflict prevention and electoral security;
- Central America, where it's reducing drug- and gang-related violence in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras through conflict mediation, capacity building and strengthening of civil society; and
- Burma, where it supports the efforts of the government, minority populations, civil society and other stakeholders to address landmines, including through raising awareness, clearing minefields and supporting victims. ■

Inside the Board Room

Panel Members Provide Glimpse into Evaluation Process

By Lawrence Mandell, director of the Office of Performance Evaluation

Performance review boards are organized every summer by the Bureau of Human Resources' Office of Performance Evaluation (HR/PE) to assess Foreign Service employees' performance. Each board consists of several peers and a public member. They review an eligible Foreign Service employee's Official Performance File, including the employee evaluation reports (EERs) for the past five years or dating to the most recent promotion, whichever is longer.

This summer, HR/PE convened 22 panels, totaling more than 100 members. The boards worked for four to six weeks at a time and were charged with recommending promotions (or, in some cases, noting low performance or commending, criticizing and counseling employees). Hundreds of FS employees were reviewed by each board.

Each board member retrieves a file electronically and reads it. The board then discusses cases, resolves differences and makes its rankings. Board members universally say the process gives them a better understanding of the range of Foreign Service work and a renewed appreciation for the system's honesty and objectivity in deciding who to promote. The process is grueling but is almost universally seen as producing excellent results, based on the information available through EERs.

The following are the views from two of this year's board members, one a panel chair and one a public member. All FS employees should get involved in this process by becoming a review panel member at post or a performance board member in Washington. In seeking volunteers for boards, HR/PE looks for diversity of grade, cone, gender, race and ethnicity. We also seek the support of supervisors, to allow employees to give full-time service to a board.

It is hard work, but well worth the investment for the chance to contribute to service needs and improve the board member's EER writing skills.

Promotion Boards Follow FS Precepts

By Larry André, director, Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan

When asked by the Office of Performance Evaluation (PE) early in 2012 to chair the G-III Foreign Service Selection Board, involving FS-03 Generalists for classwide consideration, I solicited my supervisor's approval and agreed. In June, I met my five fellow board members during PE's orientation program and learned the four FSO members were each drawn from one of the five FSO cones and from the FS02, FS01 and OC ranks, and that our public member was a history professor from Florida State University.

Our careers included service in all five regional bureaus, several

functional bureaus and in the AIP posts. (I compliment HR/PE for the breadth of members' experience.) The Department members were highly successful FSOs from busy offices. I found all my board colleagues to be conscientious, fair-minded and hard-working.

We studied closely the Procedural Precepts for the 2012 Foreign Service Selection Boards, our marching orders. This document, available on the HR/PE website, is useful reading for all FSOs and FS Specialists, as is the better known Decision Criteria document. The precepts give the boards general guidance, but leave them leeway to develop their own procedures.

As the board's chairperson, I strictly provided coordination; the role gave me no special authority in our deliberations.

We first read the 725 personnel files of all FS-03 Generalists eligible for promotion and rated them as "P" for promotable or "M" for mid-ranked. Each board member scored each file working solo, and then the board met as a group to record and discuss our scores, sometimes adjusting them based on the discussion.

A firm rule for boards is that no information about a candidate known to a board member can be discussed during the deliberations other than what is in the files. We always complied, though at times it required painful lip biting. In our reviewing, we found that our initial scores agreed 75 percent of the time (either 6/6 unanimity



Larry André served as chair of the G-III FS Selection Board for FS-03 Generalists in June.

Photo by Ed Warner

or 5/6 near unanimity). In the remaining 25 percent of cases, we discussed the merits and demerits, and board members shifted their scores. In 3/3 ties where no member initially felt moved to shift, we often gave considerable weight to the view of the board member having the same cone as the candidate under consideration.

We based our scoring and discussions on the precepts and decision criteria, noting that there are specific classwide promotion considerations separate from conal promotion considerations (The conal boards meet after we complete our work and see all the files we saw, less those of the promoted.) We made our recommendations of candidates to be immediately promoted without knowing how many promotion opportunities existed.

As we reviewed the cases, we kept note of raters, reviewers, candidates and Review Board chairs to be commended or otherwise. We commended raters and reviewers who gave plenty of specific performance examples that directly related to the decision criteria and precepts and were relevant to advancing their mission's or office's goals. We also prepared counseling messages to employees whom we felt needed encouragement to seek the assignments that would let them develop the skills to be more competitive for promotion in the future.

The second stage of our work involved re-reading the files of all candidates whom we considered promotable and ranking them. Ranking involved even more intense screening than the initial "M's & P's" screening and entailed much board discussion. Thus, candidates should feel reassured—the process is very thorough.

Throughout this experience, I learned that those who draft EERs should emphasize their organization's goals, provide specific examples of what rated officers did to contribute toward accomplishing those goals and identify their efforts to lead and inspire others toward making their fullest contributions.

Public Members Bring Fresh Views

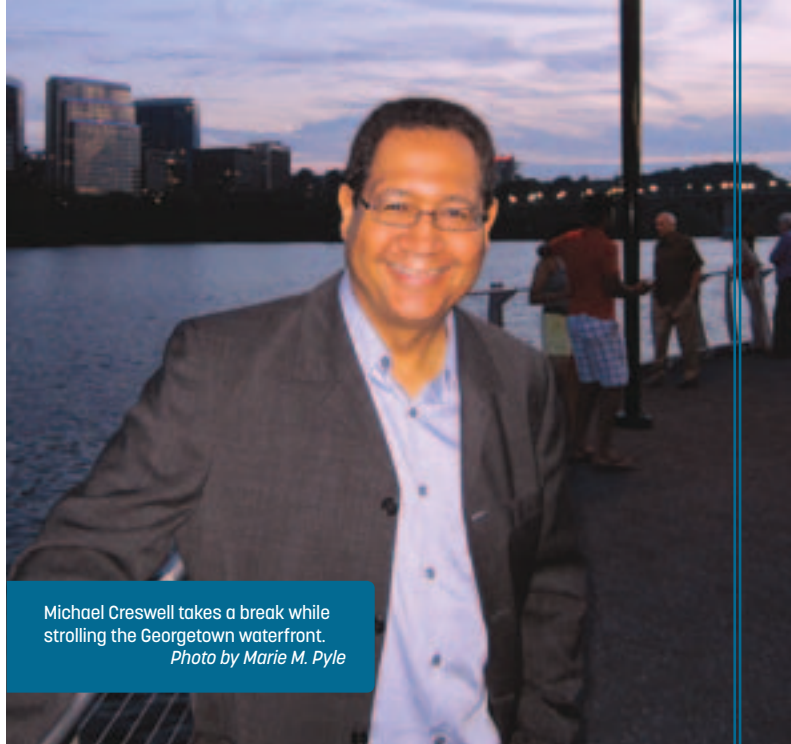
By Michael H. Creswell, professor of history,
Florida State University

This past summer, I served as the public member on the G-III Foreign Service Selection Board (FS-03 Generalists for classwide consideration) and read thousands of Employee Evaluation Reports (EER). Since I made decisions affecting the careers of many, I think it's worthwhile for those submitting EERs to understand the role of the public member.

I was recommended for that role by a former public member of a selection board, contacted by the Department to see if I was interested and advised that my board would be in session from early June to late July and would read 40 files a day. I was to be paid a per diem but, more important, I welcomed the opportunity to be in Washington, D.C., and learn more about Department of State operations.

In early June, I and about a dozen other public members arrived. Most were professors at area universities. Two were retirees—a former college professor who flew in from France and a U.S. Army retiree. At least three members were born outside the United States. We received extensive preparation. In the first week, which covered administrative details and briefings, a specialist from each job cone explained his or her area, and a past public member told about his experience. A representative from the Office of Civil Rights provided diversity training, we learned about the Board Precepts, and we received an orientation to cyber security and the need to safeguard the information we would handle. We also read background material and, at the swearing-in ceremony, met our fellow board members.

I carried the same work load as the other five members of my team and received no special treatment. As someone with no ties to the Department, I provided a check on my fellow members, to guarantee that the process was fair and impartial. Several EERs, for instance, were submitted by individuals whom my board colleagues knew



Michael Creswell takes a break while
strolling the Georgetown waterfront.
Photo by Marie M. Pyle

personally. There were even a few EERs for which one of my team members was the rater. However, these factors were not determinative. To the best of my knowledge, everyone played by the book.

Although I was the outsider, my judgments often accorded with those of my colleagues. When we did not reach a consensus, I was rarely the outlier. It seemed clear when a particular individual under consideration was doing outstanding work and demonstrably advancing the interests of the United States. I rewarded these people. There were other cases, however, when the individual was performing below the level expected of a Foreign Service officer, and I rated them accordingly.

Most cases fell somewhere in between: FSOs who were doing a good job. Here judgment was key. While I brought to bear my own education and experience, I also benefited from the experience and wisdom of my colleagues, who represented each of the five cones and had served around the world and in Washington, D.C. If I had a question or was unsure about something, I knew that I could turn to one of them for an accurate answer.

When it came time to write our letters and board recommendations on the process, each board member except me was responsible for drafting a letter for a specific area, including commendations and counseling. I proofread drafts and provided suggestions for improvement. In the recommendations, we voiced our concerns about procedures and suggested how they might be improved.

I recommend to those writing EERs that they write for the public member, a lay professional unfamiliar with both the Department's acronyms and the operations of embassies, consulates and federal agencies in Washington. Although I have a Ph.D., teach and write about diplomatic and military history professionally, have extensive overseas experience and serve as an adjunct professor for the U.S. Naval War College, I was unfamiliar with some aspects of America's diplomatic operation. I therefore welcomed and rewarded EERs that clearly laid out the mission objectives, the employee's role in reaching those objectives and how his or her efforts related to the goals of U.S. foreign policy.

The public member is important to the boards because he or she ensures that the process is fair. The public member has no ties to the Department, is free of any pressure and can view matters fresh and free from any of the biases a long-serving officer might possess. We help ensure that employees will be evaluated on the strength of their EERs and not on any other factor. ■

Building a Strong Bond

50-Year Partnership Strengthens U.S.-Africa Ties

Lydia Hall, public diplomacy officer,
and Dale Prince, ARS director

While much has changed since Africa Regional Services (ARS) was established in 1962, its core mission remains: serving African countries in search of a better future, spreading the values and ideals of American culture and building links between Africa and the United States.

According to Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of African Affairs Bruce Wharton, ARS provides “vital support to American embassies in Africa and the citizens of the countries they serve.

“It is not an exaggeration to say that generations of Africans, from Nouakchott to Antananarivo, have been able to get to know America—its values and its people—through the work of ARS,” he said.

ARS, a resource to U.S. embassies in Africa and the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, has an office that is tucked away in a bustling, chic Parisian shopping district. The office is based in Paris because the city is the capital of the French-speaking world, offers easy access to numerous publishers and French-speaking American experts and artists, and



While serving as DAS for Public Diplomacy in the AF Bureau, U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe David Bruce Wharton, left, met with ARS Director Dale Prince and U.S. Ambassador to France Charles Rivkin, right, at the ARS anniversary reception.

Photo by Odile Lebongo

has transportation and communications links with the African continent, explained U.S. Ambassador to France Charles Rivkin.

A branch of the Bureau of African Affairs, ARS employs two Americans and 19 Locally Employed Staff, who create and nurture relationships between Africans and Americans. Examples of its work include production of college textbooks, which are translated into French and published and sold by ARS's book imprint, Nouveaux Horizons (NH). ARS also organizes cultural exchanges, such as bringing American musicians to an Africa village, and video conferences, as when an American journalist engages journalism students in Côte d'Ivoire on the importance of verifying information.

ARS was created at a time when the U.S. government was developing new agencies to advance world peace and security, such as the Peace Corps and USAID (1961). "As Africa was experiencing a wave of new countries accessing independence, ARS was designed to serve African Francophone countries, spreading the values and ideals of American culture," said Ambassador Rivkin.

Starting in 1962, NH began producing French translations of American books, making them available at low cost to African bookstores and U.S. posts in Africa. Its special pricing for Africa has given African readers and students access to French translations of important American books. The textbooks it publishes are often part of the curriculum in African universities, and ARS Director Dale Prince said many readers have shared stories about studying with NH books all through their university years.

NH has begun partnering with prestigious European publishers and now boasts a popular youth catalogue in addition to its long-standing adult collection. Today it has a network of 65 client bookstores in 26 countries throughout Francophone Africa and distributes more than 120,000 books per year.

"I have known of and used ARS services in many guises for almost 30 years," said Miriam Guichard, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ARS director. "Without ARS's resources and extraordinary distribution system, many, if not all, American embassies in Francophone posts would have severely limited audiences for their information and cultural programs."

While historically focused on resources in French, ARS today serves all of Africa, including Anglophone and Lusophone posts.

"American Cultural Centers in Africa draw students and professionals alike, for NH books, thematic books and other reference titles selected from the ARS Books in French or Portuguese Lists, and magazines and publications dealing with all aspects of



Above: ARS Performing Artists Nicola Ayoub and Asha Thomas visit St. Joseph's, an all-girl school in Banjul. *Photo by Embassy Banjul; Below:* The ARS graphics shop in Paris in the early 1980s printed materials for distribution in Africa. *Department of State photo*



American culture," said Prince. "Furthermore, we promote exchanges by bringing together American and African journalists, entrepreneurs, intellectuals, artists and sports people, thanks to our Speakers and Artists Program."

To stay ahead of the digital curve, ARS is actively engaging on social media platforms in French and English, and plans to release an e-book.

"The State Department is proud of the 50 years of extraordinary service that ARS has provided to generations of Africans," said Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs Johnnie Carson. "I know that while the medium may change in the 50 years to come, ARS's mission will remain the same: to spread American ideas and culture and strengthen our relationship with Africa." ■



Post of the Month

Port-au-Prince

Haiti post offers rewarding work and cultural riches

By John Armiger, Neil DiBiase, Ajani Husbands and Régine René-Labrousse





Haitians plant bushes and trees to stop erosion and to enrich the soil in a UN Cash-for-Work program.



United Nations photo



Haitians affectionately call their homeland “Ayiti Cheri” (Haiti, my love), reflecting their deep affection for it. Mission employees also grow quite fond of Haiti, with many returning for second and even third tours. Though headlines often highlight catastrophes—both natural and man-made—they do not fully capture life on the western half of Hispaniola, the Caribbean island Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic. For those who accommodate its challenges and embrace its charms, Haiti offers a rich array of professional opportunities and cultural delights.

Roughly the size of Maryland, Haiti features mountainous landscapes and more than a thousand miles of dramatic coastline. Haiti and Cuba bookend the famed Windward Passage, the shipping lane connecting the U.S. eastern seaboard to the Panama Canal.

Coffee and sugar made “Saint Domingue” the world’s richest colony before Toussaint Louverture launched a guerrilla war to oust the French and gain independence in 1804, making Haiti the world’s first black republic. The uprising forced Napoleon to sell the Louisiana Territory to finance French war efforts. The monument-filled capital reminds visitors of the country’s revolutionary past, of which Haitians are fiercely proud.

Kreyòl and French are the national languages, though many Haitians learn English and Spanish. They strongly identify with their “Konpa culture,” the distinctive national music whose pulsating beat draws from Caribbean and African influences. In March 2010, famous Konpa singer Michel Martelly became the country’s third democratically elected president. It’s not uncommon to catch President Martelly, whose stage name is “Sweet Micky,” giving an impromptu performance at Hotel Oloffson, the gingerbread guesthouse and setting for Graham Greene’s 1966 novel “The Comedians.”

One Mission, One Voice

The U.S. Mission’s large interagency presence, consisting of 11 government agencies, works with Haitian leaders to help generate momentum and fulfill the country’s potential in the wake of the 2010 earthquake, which set the country back after a period of sustained economic growth. U.S. assistance is focused on four pillars: governance and rule of law, infrastructure and energy, food and economic security, and health and other basic services. A whole-of-government approach enables the mission to address perennially knotty problems.

A focus of the political section is to help ensure credible and transparent elections, and

assist the Haitian government in its efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law. Through a State Department/New York City partnership, the narcotics affairs section oversees a handful of Haitian-American NYPD officers who spend three-month rotations mentoring their Haitian National Police counterparts. The economic section assists U.S. firms seeking to source Haitian Mountain Blue coffee and fair-trade Fransik mangoes. The mission’s Health Pillar Team—composed of CDC and USAID—has aided international efforts to curb the spread of cholera. The public diplomacy section, for the first time since 2004, is bringing American Fulbright Scholars back to the island. On the northern coast is the recently opened Caracol Industrial Park (“*State Magazine*”, October). The facility is the largest of its kind in the Caribbean, and is one of the foreign investments designed to revitalize an export sector whose products once included the balls used in Major League Baseball.

However, the 52 percent adult literacy rate and highest brain drain in the world (80 percent of university-trained citizens) continue to hamper Haiti’s growth, which remains heavily dependent on remittances and foreign aid. Despite progress in reducing gang violence and crime, mission personnel have a midnight curfew, and travel in armored vehicles to certain city sections. Traffic jams, poor infrastructure, frequent power outages and a lack of green space mean that those assigned to Haiti earn their 30 percent hardship differential.

International Presence

Though transportation is frustrating, it is well worth the effort to explore Port-au-Prince, the hilly seaside capital and congested hub of activity whose population exceeds two million. A broad array of embassies, multilateral institutions and nongovernmental organizations enrich the social scene centering on Pétionville, a suburb full of art galleries, French pastry shops, live-music venues and restaurants whose cuisine ranges from Dutch to French to Thai to Lebanese. After dinner and on weekends, the music scene heats up with DJs and local Konpa bands.

The mission community is a mix of individuals and a dozen families whose children attend one of four local schools that use an English or French curriculum. Across the street from the new embassy complex is a gated community with dozens of single-family townhomes, a swimming pool, tennis court and clubhouse that is adjacent to a sugarcane museum whose gardens are a premier concert venue. Those who live near Pétionville trade

longer commutes to be at the social scene’s doorstep. The large presence of international actors creates employment opportunities for eligible family members through the bilateral work agreement.

Right: Schoolchildren enjoy recess at Ecole Marie Dominique Mazzarello in Port-au-Prince. **Far right:** USAID Haiti Mission Director Carleene Dei, right, looks at crops grown as part of USAID’s Feed the Future initiative. *Photos by Kendra Helmer/USAID;* **Below:** Employees from the U.S. and Canadian embassies face off in a friendly basketball game won by the host U.S. team. *Photo by U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince*





Above: Then-Ambassador Merten, right, and Mrs. Merten, second from left, share a moment with former President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter following an event to raise awareness for a joint CDC-Haitian government health initiative. *Photo by U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince;* **Below:** U.S. Embassy election monitors Brenda Barrett and Rebecca Levy talk with voting officials after the polls closed in Tabarre in the second round of presidential elections in 2011. *Photo by Kendra Helmer/USAID*



In 2008, the Haitian government put tourism on the agenda to draw visitors to its many historical gems like the Citadel Henry, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the largest fortress in the Western Hemisphere, completed a few years after independence from France. Unfortunately, travel within Haiti is expensive and accommodation still often rustic. Among the most popular activities are hiking amid pine trees in the cool Kenscoff mountain air or relaxing at Sunday brunch while sipping mimosas and listening to live jazz.

Tropical Relaxation

Mission employees also enjoy reveling at Carnival in Jacmel, a tranquil southern artisan city known for its papier-mâché masks, and spending long weekends at the beach enjoying the tropical breeze, fresh seafood and sweet rum punch. One of the largest cruise ships in the Royal Caribbean fleet anchors off Haiti's northern coast each week so its sun-seeking tourists can play on the white sand of Labadee Beach.

To work up a sweat on the weekends, many mission employees run with the Hash House Harriers, play Ultimate Frisbee or compete in frequent tennis tournaments at the ambassador's residence. Others volunteer at the Sacré-Coeur English Club and Rose Mina Orphanage, both supported by J. Kirby Simon Trust grants. Weekdays, the Marine House—recently host to a chili cook-off—is the preferred venue to wind down. Active workout groups help relieve workday stress.

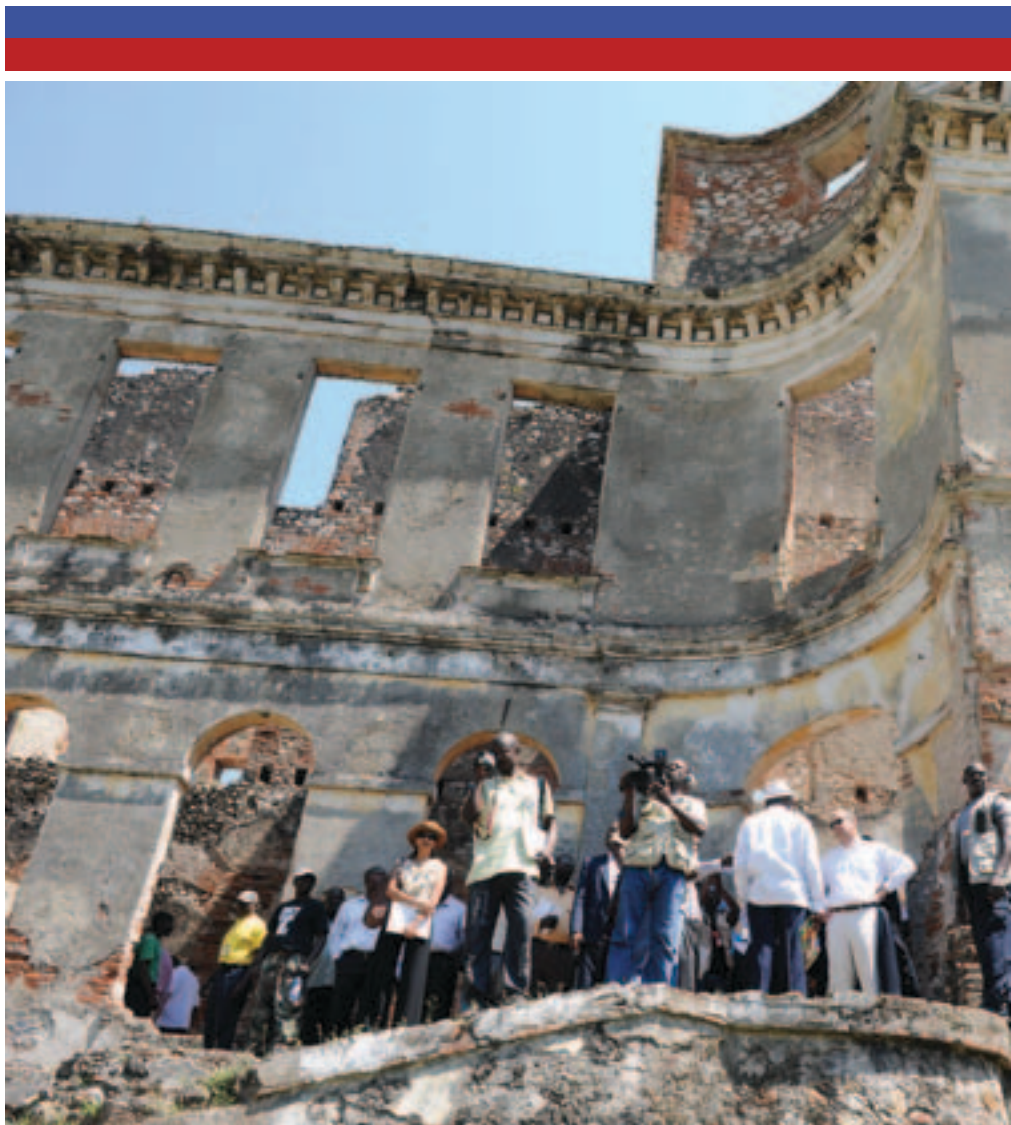
For travel outside Haiti, eight daily direct flights connect South Florida and the New York metro area to Port-au-Prince. With several air links to its island neighbors, Haiti is also a good launching pad to explore the Caribbean.

"Haiti is more," a phrase coined by a recent visitor, sums up how Haiti, despite the daily hardships, offers a rare blend of professional and personal rewards. Many have been bitten by the "Haiti bug" after just a few weeks. Those who serve here find themselves inserting Krèyol expressions into their daily parlance or humming the latest Konpa tune. Recently departed Ambassador Ken Merten, who served three tours in Port-au-Prince, said Haiti's appeal is in the beauty of the country, the fascinating culture and the warmth of the people. "Not surprisingly," he noted, "there are a lot of people who come to serve here several times in their career." Indeed, Ambassador Pamela White, who presented her credentials to President Martelly in August, is serving in Haiti for the second time.

Editor's Note: The authors are entry-level officers who served in the political, consular, economic and public diplomacy sections at Embassy Port-au-Prince. ■



Clockwise from above: Former President Bill Clinton is flanked by Haiti President Michel Martelly and then-U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Merten at the unveiling of the plaque for the Caracol Industrial Park in northern Haiti; John Atis, regional director for USAID's Feed the Future agriculture program, shows off the cabbage grown at the Wynne Farm outside Port-au-Prince; Ambassador Merten and others tour the Sans Souci Palace, a World Heritage Site in northern Haiti. USAID rehabilitated the historic stone wall and ironwork gates. Photos by Kendra Helmer/USAID





At a Glance

Haiti

Capital: Port-au-Prince

Government type: Republic

Area: 27,750 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly smaller than Maryland

Population: 9.8 million

Languages: French and Kreyòl (both official)

Religions: Roman Catholic and Protestant; Note: Roughly half of the population practices voodoo.

GDP—per capita: \$1,300

Export partners: United States

Export commodities: Apparel, manufactured goods, oils, cocoa, mangoes and coffee

Import partners: Dominican Republic, U.S. and Netherlands Antilles

Import commodities: Food, manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment

Currency: Gourdes (HTG)

Internet country code: .ht

Source: Country Background Notes

Building Friendships

IIP Program Helps Posts Boost Social Media Presence

By Elizabeth Kelleher, features editor, Bureau of International Information Programs



In April, a few weeks before the U.S. Embassy in Amman was to host an American contemporary dance troupe performing in “Zakharef in Motion,” Jordan’s international festival, the embassy’s online-media specialist was on the phone daily with an Arabic-language Facebook manager and blogger from the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP).

Leading an IIP team, the Washington manager helped the embassy devise creative social media promotions for the coming dance performance and a strategy for distribution to large Jordanian communities that was posted in English and Arabic on Facebook pages.

The outcome? The auditorium for the troupe’s performance was packed, major news outlets covered the event and Embassy Amman’s Facebook page gained nearly 3,000 new fans, mostly young people.

American diplomats understand how to engage people in their host countries but are often less than comfortable using social media to connect with them. So IIP this year held a 20/100 Social Media Challenge aimed at helping 20 U.S. posts increase their social media fan bases by 100 percent between February and September. With the IIP team’s help, all participating missions reached their goal, and some went far beyond. The U.S. Embassy in Algiers, for instance, grew its social media presence by 1,300 percent.

Before the challenge, IIP ran experiments on its own Facebook pages, tweaking marketing to attract fans, testing content to keep young visitors loyal and linking to third-party sites to boost interactivity. In the process, the bureau saw the number of fans on its Facebook pages grow from roughly 1 million to almost 10 million in a year and a half.

That success, IIP leadership believed, was replicable in the field. Considering that the bureau’s foremost goal is to support Department posts, IIP kicked off the 20/100 challenge to share what it learned.

Today, Facebook and Twitter logos grace most embassy websites, and posts’ web managers have heeded the call of Alec Ross, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’s senior advisor for innovation, to move social media to the top of their toolboxes. But many need help expanding their reach and are working with IIP mentors to gain confidence with the new platforms.

“Diplomats’ people skills are transferable to running Facebook or Twitter campaigns,” said Rebecca Winchester, IIP’s managing director of platforms. “At the end of the day, both require the ability to create relationships and instill a sense of community among people who share common interests.”

Twitter won’t replace face-to-face meetings, and YouTube doesn’t supplant traditional diplomatic events, but both amplify

the activities of an embassy. In its challenge, IIP worked with small action teams at each participating post to plan campaigns to reach a specific demographic with a regionally relevant call to action. Together, IIP and teams at post built content schedules, made photo and video selections and developed discussion questions and quizzes or polls.

IIP’s specialists recommended integrating tweets, Facebook postings, YouTube videos and even other organizations’ platforms to make campaigns more robust. They and the teams then worked through the details, such as figuring out the best time of day to post content on new platforms.

IIP worked with embassies to leverage visits by the President or Secretary of State to attract more viewers to the posts’ social media activities. During the 2012 Nuclear Summit events in Seoul, for instance, IIP’s Hae Jin Higgins traveled to the embassy to help implement an Ask President Obama campaign, elements of which ran on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. In three days, the embassy upped its Twitter following and Facebook fans by 700 percent and received international coverage from major media outlets. President Obama helped the push by mentioning the campaign in his remarks at Korea’s Hufs University.

Working with Peter Vrooman, information officer at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, and his staff, a team of IIP staffers including Pat Barkhuff and Kelly Daniel helped launch a new Facebook page for the embassy in March and supported the page as it went from zero to 100,000 fans in six months. The IIP advised the post on content and marketing strategies through weekly calls and digital video chats on IIP’s CO.NX platform. The team worked to amplify Mission India’s media rollout plan for the IIP-produced video heralding the arrival of U.S. Ambassador Nancy Powell on Facebook, Twitter, online press and broadcast television,

resulting in hundreds of millions of viewers across India.

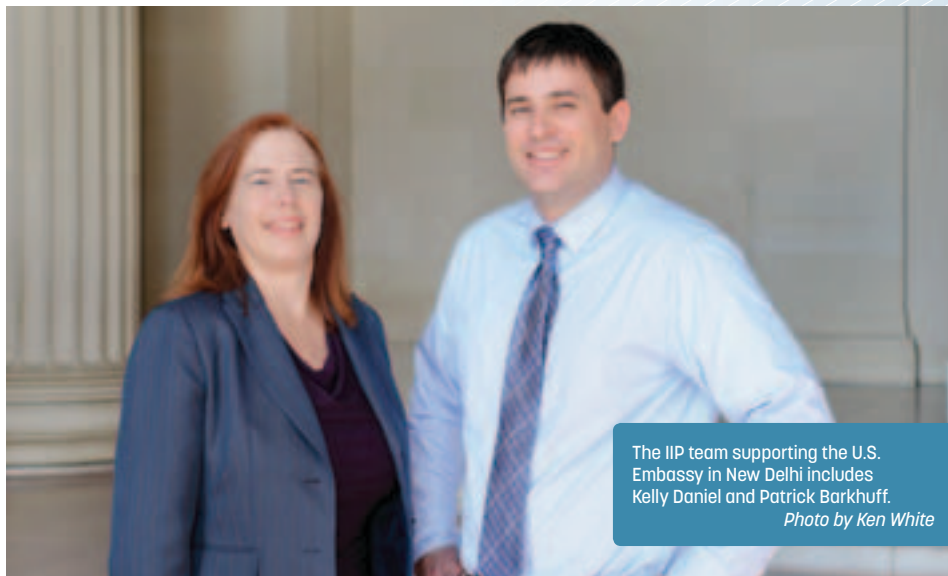
Meanwhile at the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia, Public Affairs Officer Keith Petersen had set for his team the modest goal of gaining 1,500 “likes” for its Facebook page. He said he was surprised that, with IIP’s advice and just \$21 in marketing, the page surpassed the goal.

“Today 1,600 likes, tomorrow 2,000,” he said. “To quote Buzz Lightyear in ‘Toy Story,’ ‘To infinity and beyond!’”

Clearly, putting money into marketing isn’t always necessary. In fact, Embassy New Delhi’s team said that, with IIP’s help, they dramatically lowered their Facebook page’s cost-per-fan and maximized their marketing budget. Similarly, Sara Devlin of the U.S. Embassy in Dakar asked her IIP mentor to help get a Twitter feed off the ground, and IIP worked with her to use HootSuite, an inexpensive tool to schedule tweets and monitor their popularity.

Behind the success stories is more than just marketing and technical know-how—the program also helps posts develop a knack for knowing what attracts young fans. “E-mail-generation” media managers need to gauge the tastes of the “social network generation.” Sometimes it just takes brainstorming with IIP mentors about what works on their pages, where visitors are on average 17 years old.

Based on lessons from this first round of the 20/100 program, IIP is ramping up an Oct. 1 rollout for phase two. Incorporating experiences and regional nuances from this year’s participants, the next phase will be the 20/100/100 Challenge, which will give IIP and participating posts just 100 days to grow each mission’s social media properties by 100 percent, less than half the time taken during the first round of collaborations. During fiscal 2013, IIP hopes to conduct three rounds of the challenge, helping 60 missions. ■



The IIP team supporting the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi includes Kelly Daniel and Patrick Barkhuff.

Photo by Ken White



Networking Works

Engaging exchange alumni for diplomacy's future

By Lisa Barton, alumni outreach coordinator, Alumni Affairs Division

What do the alumni of State Department-sponsored exchange programs do once they return to their homelands? With the support of the Alumni Affairs Division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), they change the world.

The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) calls on the Department to look beyond traditional definitions of public diplomacy and engage broader audiences than officials in government ministries and global organizations.

To meet this challenge, the Alumni Affairs Division works with overseas missions to leverage alumni of exchange programs to:

- Shape the Narrative: "We've developed a diverse network of young alumni that is prepared to participate in Yemen's historic national dia-

logue process with a politically mature, unified voice," said Ambassador to Yemen Gerald Feierstein, noting that the network has given the embassy a larger footprint "and an expanded and productive dialogue with a larger, more geographically diverse population of Yemenis."

- Support Strategic Goals: "In Mission Pakistan, we see our exchange program alumni as one of our greatest resources," said the mission's Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer Laura Brown. "Every day, they demonstrate the shared core values of Pakistanis and Americans as they work to make a positive impact on their communities. Young alumni organize leadership-skills classes that empower students throughout the country, political training and entrepreneurship sessions to teach disadvantaged women to become active citizens and mentorship pro-



grams to expose young alumni to the careers of their dreams.”

- **Inform Policy:** The public affairs section at the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm has formed thematic focus groups of exchange program alumni, who “understand both Swedish and U.S. culture [and] help us to better understand the Swedish perspective of our foreign policy,” said Assistant Public Affairs Officer Danielle Harms. “When our new Ambassador arrived last November, the groups were an integral part of his introduction to Sweden.”

Beyond serving as a resource to missions, “the Alumni Affairs Division ensures that the benefits of our exchanges—for Americans and alumni—continue well beyond the program’s formal end,” observed Ann Stock, assistant secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The division was created in 2004 to enable the Department to cultivate and

Clockwise from left: A young alumnus paints a sidewalk design devoted to his exchange experience; Division staff and partners from overseas gather for a photo during the August 2012 Alumni outreach training in Washington; Alumni from around the world convene for a youth global conference.

State Department photos



Office of the Month

extend the impacts of exchange programs. “When I joined the office,” said Regional Alumni Coordinator Jason Haserodt, “we spent a lot of time convincing skeptics why alumni engagement was worth their time and resources. They generally agreed that it was beneficial over the long term; however, our office needed to show people how alumni programming could lead to meaningful, immediate results.”

A decade later, the benefits are clear. “Since 2004 we have expanded our network so much that in any country in the world you will not only find alumni of U.S.-sponsored exchange programs, you will find exchange alumni that are active citizens and influential leaders in their communities,” said Suzanne Weinerman, ECA’s global alumni coordinator. “Exchange programs make a huge impact on individuals, but it’s those individuals that are force multipliers of mutual understanding among nations. The support system that Alumni Affairs has created helps sustain this invaluable network.”

Today, Alumni Affairs has a staff of 11 in Washington and more than 90 alumni coordinators at posts abroad. They endeavor to

engage more than one million ECA exchange alumni, including more than 360 current and former heads of state and 52 Nobel laureates, and coordinate the products and services that overseas missions, alumni and ECA senior staff use to develop and leverage alumni networks.

Regional alumni coordinators serve as the hub of their geographic area’s alumni engagement network, building a community, developing alumni outreach strategies, sharing best practices regionally and linking missions with Alumni Affairs resources. The latter include funding for more than 600 alumni projects since 2004; the Alumni Archive, a database of all ECA exchange alumni; and annual alumni outreach trainings carried out in cooperation with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI course PY344).

“Exchange alumni are among the strongest U.S. allies abroad,” Karen Robblee, the division’s new director, said, “because they understand the United States. They also speak the local language.” She added that the division “helps embassies channel the energy of these local leaders by serving as a one-stop shop that can advise missions on how embas-

sies are engaging alumni across the world. The [division’s grants] help missions extend their relationships with alumni and encourage them to share their U.S. experience with others in their countries.”

The division also manages the State Alumni website (<https://alumni.state.gov>), which gives alumni of all U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs access to a variety of resources, including a database of \$33 billion in grants, networking opportunities with nearly 100,000 other alumni, video webchats with State Department VIPs, job and volunteer opportunities and a digital library of more than 20,000 publications.

Since 2011 the division has hosted the annual Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (<https://alumni.state.gov/aeif>) on State Alumni, a funding competition in which teams of alumni submit proposals for up to \$25,000 for public service projects. The 2012 competition mobilized more than 7,000 alumni from 115 countries on such strategic initiatives as entrepreneurship, women’s issues, outreach to underserved communities and youth engagement. The winning 2011 projects





Top: Alumni perform at the Ilkhom Theatre in Uzbekistan to raise money for local orphanages. **Above:** The division's staff are all smiles as they gather for a photo. **Opposite page:** Alumni speak about education and donate books to an elementary school in China's Xilua village.

State Department photos

have already produced results in the following areas:

- **Women's Entrepreneurship:** A Tanzanian team of 40 alumni provided 200 impoverished women with training in entrepreneurial business practices. All the women started small businesses, 30 of which have grown into full-fledged enterprises.
- **Youth Engagement:** A team of Mexican alumni brought 38 indigenous youths from eight Mexican states and nine ethnic groups to a five-week seminar on leadership and project implementation.

Sixteen environmental, agricultural and cultural preservation projects emerged, and the program has been adopted permanently by its host institution.

- **A winning Vietnamese team** provided 41 professional ethics workshops for 2,300 young Vietnamese journalists. The team's leader addressed civil society leaders in more than 51 countries via a web-chat on the State Alumni website.
- **Women and Youth in the Democratic Process:** A team of alumni from Cameroon sparked a national discussion on increased roles for youth and women in politics. Several female candidates cited participation in the project as inspiration for running in parliamentary and municipal elections.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** Twenty-three Macedonian alumni mentored 400 students at several universities, implementing projects to advocate for equal access and equal rights and to dispel stereotypes. One project was featured twice on national television.

The State Alumni website is undergoing a makeover that will enable Alumni Affairs to recognize and promote alumni accomplishments. Partners can follow the State Alumni Facebook page (facebook.com/StateAlumni) for updates on the status of the new website.

To support ECA leadership, Alumni Affairs gathers and promotes alumni activities and accomplishments and is working with ECA's information technology office to better capture these alumni results through existing databases. In the meantime, the division has launched the Evidence of Effectiveness database to house information not currently incorporated in other databases.

The division's partners within the Department can share their alumni impact stories with Alumni Affairs via cable (the KALU tag is in the approval process) or by e-mailing their regional alumni coordinator. Ideas for future collaboration can be discussed with the author at BartonLM@state.gov. □



MED Embraces the Health IT Revolution

By Dean Smith, M.D., senior advisor for Medical Informatics, Office of Medical Services

Advances in technology affect virtually every aspect of daily life, including health care. In fact, the technology revolution is changing the practice of medicine as much as did the discovery of anesthesia in the 1840s and antibiotics in the 1930s. And even though high-tech scans, monoclonal cancer drugs and robotic surgery generate headlines, it's the use of information technology to capture, store and analyze medical information that is truly leading this health care revolution.

For the Office of Medical Services (MED), not being late to the new "health IT dance" has proven a daunting task. Significant barriers, especially the austere technology infrastructure a worldwide medical practice must contend with, have posed enormous challenges. But senior Department management, recognizing the value of a healthy, productive workforce and the increasingly important role IT plays in quality health care, has given MED the guidance and resources to embrace this medical IT revolution. Following are some of the health information technologies we are implementing:

Electronic Health Records

Our patient population is globally deployed, highly mobile and at risk for a wide variety of tropical and travel-related ailments. Many of our clinicians have regional care responsibilities, some for large regions. Yet MED, which should be a poster child for the benefits of electronic health records (EHR), has a paper-based medical record system, due in large part to the technical barriers mentioned above. However, advances in technology, including improvements in OpenNet, mean that is about to change.

MED recently signed an interagency agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard to jointly procure a highly regarded commercial EHR system, Epic. This agreement, the first of its kind in the federal sector, serves as a model for interagency cooperation. More importantly, it saves the U.S. taxpayer millions of dollars by sharing system licensing and support costs.

MED is in the early stages of implementing Epic. We have enlisted the support of the Bureau of Information Resource Management, including the Project Service Office, Information Assurance and eGov, as well as the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. We have tested Epic in a simulated OpenNet environment and started initial system configuration, but much work lies ahead. We are on an ambitious time line, with pilot testing planned in our Washington, D.C., clinics early next year, followed by deployment at overseas health units.

Telemedicine + MED = TeleMED

Telemedicine is the use of video conferencing technology to conduct medical consultations between a patient and clinician who are in different locations. It is especially useful for providing care to individuals in remote locations with limited medical resources, and thus is ideally suited to support the health care needs of many of our patients.

MED recently deployed telemedicine capabilities at 20 health units in remote locales and 10 regional support hubs. We are also extending telemedicine capabilities to our medevac centers and regional psychiatrists. This project, which we call TeleMED, augments the care MED clinicians provide patients in these medically underserved locations. Given the regional coverage responsibilities of many MED clinicians, TeleMED is an excellent way to use technology to expand care. We will be looking to expand this service in the years ahead.

MCI Database

MED maintains a database of overseas medical capabilities that is used in the medical clearance process. This database allows MED to align the medical needs of a patient with the medical capabilities of a post. We are launching a new software system, the Medical Capabilities Information (MCI) database, to manage this information. The MCI captures the full range of medical capabilities at post. In addition to guiding medical clearance determinations, it serves as a valuable tool in identifying local resources that could provide medical support during natural disasters and epidemics.

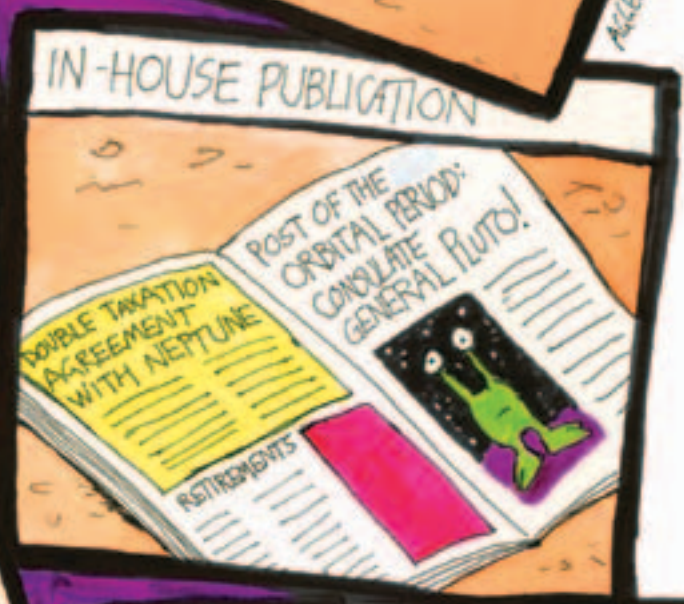
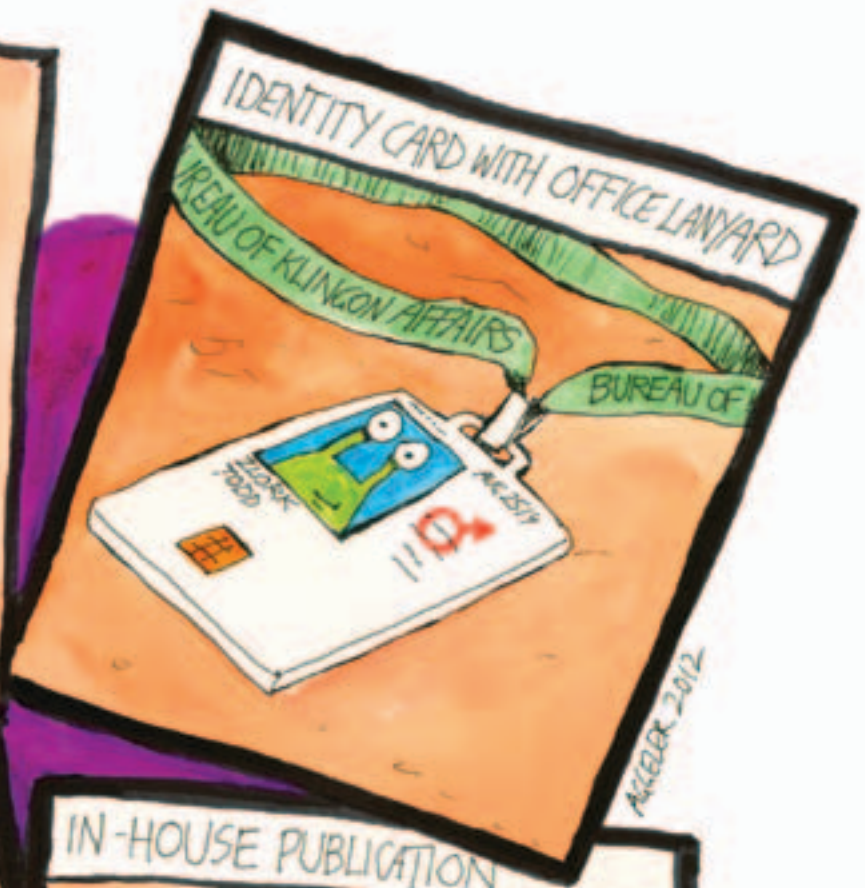
We will soon be adding a "Medical Clearance Preview" portal to the MCI. This portal will provide Foreign Service bidders with post-specific medical resource information as they start the bidding process, thus making the medical clearance process more interactive and transparent. Look for a "go live" announcement regarding the portal in the near future.

Access vs. Security

The aforementioned IT projects are just a few of several under way in MED, each with the goal of improving access of clinicians and patients to the medical information they need. However, we must balance access with the need for privacy and security. We owe our patients—you and your families—the best health care we can deliver. Accessible yet secure health care information is integral to that aim. ■



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Marines Return to Guadalcanal

Seventy years after the 1st Marine Division came ashore on Guadalcanal in 1942, the Marines returned there recently to commemorate that battle and pay tribute to the battle's veterans and their families. U.S. Ambassador to the Solomon Islands Teddy B. Taylor joined Commander of the Navy's Pacific Fleet Admiral Cecil B. Haney, Commandant of the Marine Corps General James Amos and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Michael Barrett for the event, which also recognized the partnership between the Solomon Islands and United States.

Through a series of solemn ceremonies, the State Department, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard paid their respects at the U.S. Guadalcanal Battle monument and at memorials to the Solomon Scouts and Coast Watchers and to U.S. Coast Guard Signalman Douglas Munro, the Coast Guard's only Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. The 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force band from Okinawa provided a musical salute.

Ambassador Taylor read a letter from President Barack Obama to the Solomon Scouts and Coast Watchers thanking them for their service and support of the allied forces. He then met with Solomon Scout Eroni Kumana, who helped rescue Lieutenant John F. Kennedy after the sinking of PT 109. As President Obama said in his letter, "If it were not for the Scouts and Coast Watchers, history would have been quite different."



Ambassador Teddy Taylor, right, meets with, from left, General James Amos and Admiral Cecil Haney at the U.S. Battle Memorial at Guadalcanal.
Photo by Sgt. Mallory S. VanderSchans, USMC

Department Remembers *M.S. St. Louis* Tragedy

The State Department in September commemorated the 70th anniversary of the "*M.S. St. Louis* tragedy," in which that ship's 937 Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution were denied entry by several nations in 1939. The cornerstone of the commemoration was the presentation to the Department of a copy of a Senate Resolution regarding the tragedy that was signed by 37 survivors from the ship. Nearly a third of the passengers ultimately died in the Holocaust.

Nations such as the United States and Cuba did not allow the refugees to disembark, but later in the voyage several nations,

including Belgium, England and France accepted the refugees. Representatives of those nations attended the Department event and were presented Proclamations of Gratitude by Director General Linda Thomas-Greenfield. Recipients included Ambassador Jan Matthysen of Belgium and Ambassador Rudolf Bekink of the Netherlands.

Thomas-Greenfield told the gathering in the George C. Marshall Conference Center that she fondly recalled her time in the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, "where still to this day hangs a picture of the *M.S. St. Louis* to remind us of the impact of our work and of the individuals behind policy decisions." Other Department officials attending included Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Hannah Rosenthal and Deputy Secretary William Burns.

2012 POLAD of the Year Announced

The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs has named James McNaught winner of its first Robert D. Murphy POLAD (political advisor) of the Year Award. McNaught served as a POLAD to the Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) and Marine Forces Europe and Africa (MARFOR) from 2008 to 2012. The Deputy Commander of MARFOR, Brigadier General Charles G. Chiarotti, nominated McNaught for contributing "to a markedly higher level of foreign policy coordination, communication and integration between the Department of State and Defense, resulting in more effective efforts to achieve State Department strategic objectives."

McNaught assisted with the SOCEUR engagement with the Russian military in the first joint exercise of the two in the United States and developed an education program designed for Special Operations Forces assigned to country teams that provided operational and tactical scenarios to chiefs of mission and country team members. He also obtained status of forces protective agreements across the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility and worked to avoid a delay in training the Georgian troops supporting the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

The award was established in May to recognize the contributions of individual POLADs and is named for Foreign Service Officer Robert D. Murphy, a foreign policy advisor to General Dwight D. Eisenhower during World War II.

Kinshasa Holds Health Fair

In August, the medical unit staff and 40 embassy and local volunteers helped the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa hold its first health fair in three years. The four-hour fair drew more than 250 participants, who gained information on preventive health and wellness benefits.

Topics covered included diabetes, high blood pressure, nutrition, physical fitness, family planning and potable water. There was also information on rabies, cholera, Ebola, malaria and HIV. Participants gathered information to take to their primary care providers, had their glucose checked, learned their blood pressure and body mass index, and got an HIV test. Next year's fair will have information on smoking cessation, dental hygiene and foot care, and more robust information on malaria.

Ambassador James Entwistle, center, greets the staff of an HIV counseling center during the event.
Photo by Matti DeSousa



Videos of Special Ed Needs Seminar on BNet, Web

Each year, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) offers a Special Education Needs Seminar for employees who have children with special education needs and will be assigned to a U.S. mission abroad. The videos of the latest seminar are now on BNet (OpenNet) and the FSI Transition Center's Internet site. The presentations provide a comprehensive picture of the Department's special education support system and guide parents on proactively navigating the system to plan for a child's education overseas.

The topics and presenters include:

- Navigating the System, by Dr. Stanley S. Piotroski, director, Employee Consultation Services
- Educating My Child, Dr. Pamela A. Ward, regional education officer, Office of Overseas Schools
- Parent to Parent, Dianna Rooney and Charles Roe, crisis management team, Family Liaison Office

To see the videos, visit <http://bnet.state.gov> (enter "FSI Special Education Needs" in the BNet search box) or search for "2012 FSI Special Education Needs" on the Department's Internet site. Links on both sites allow downloading of the presentation slides.

Food Donations Break Record

The Department's summer Feds Feeds Families (FFF) campaign surpassed its goal by nearly four times. Employees donated a total of 20,175 pounds of nonperishable groceries, the largest amount ever recorded for a State Department food drive, winter or summer.

Among the strategies that promoted awareness and increased participation in the campaign, the "I Fed a Family Today" and "Olympian Challenge" themes proved popular and sparked friendly competition between offices and bureaus. By donating 4,377 pounds of food, employees of the Foreign Service Institute won the Olympian Challenge.

The FFF is a collaborative effort between the Office of Employee Relations' (ER) Work Life Division and the Bureau of Administration. "We send our sincere thanks to all who participated in the food drive, for it's your generosity and thoughtfulness that was key to breaking the record and helping so many families in need," said ER Director John Bernlohr.

For additional information on this program and how your office or bureau may become involved in the next food drive, e-mail fedsfeedfamilies@state.gov. ■



Retirements

Foreign Service

Adams, Marvin Lee
Barrow, Ann J.
Harding, Peter X.
Huskey, James L.
Ironfield, Sally B.
Kennedy, Laura-Elizabeth
Lumley, Rebecca L.
McMullen, Ronald Keith
Monetta, Maureen A.
Neiss Jr., Roland D.

Nichols, Michelle A.
Pflaumer, Walter
Rosenstiel, Beth J.
Schall, Mark D.
Sincavage, Justine M.
Strachan, Nancy B.
Swaner, Karan E.
Viggiano, Roberta E.
Werderman, Charles F.

Civil Service

Beasley, Connie
Brennan, Mary Grace
Briscoe, Donna M.
Cole, Robert Kendall
Coonelly, Ronald J.
Cox, John T.
Davidson, Davida A.
Fischman, Joel A.
Forbes-Gray, Debra L.
Gilman, Timothy G.
Grant, Cheylon Adkins

Lee, Berneta J.
Longstreet, Samuel P.
Lundahl, Karen E.
Malecki, Cynthia A.
Mustafayev, Leonid G.
Pritchett, James R.
Reardon, Marie T.
Simmons, Donna M.
Washburn, Thomas D.
White, Sue A.
Zerden, Mal L.

Active Years

Writing Life

Retiree becomes successful author

By Judith Heimann

It all started in 1966 in Borneo, when I was not yet a Foreign Service officer. My husband John, I and our two children, ages 4 and 6, had just arrived in Kuching, Sarawak, where John began his assignment as U.S. consul for East Malaysia and Brunei.

Where it will all end, I've no idea, but since retirement I've made one overseas neighbor the subject of a book and, through that research, came upon the idea for my second book, which became a hardback, paperback, e-book, audio book and PBS documentary.

But back to 1966...When I took the kids to their local doctor for a good-health visit, I noticed on the walls of his office were photos of smiling babies. But these were smiling baby orangutans! The doctor told me they were from our neighbor Tom Harrison, who ran the local zoo and was raising the orangutan orphans, sent to him in the hope that they might someday return to the jungle.

"Tom has his finger in every interesting pie in this country," said the doctor. "He is not everybody's cup of tea, but he is certainly not boring company."



We soon found the doctor had not exaggerated in speaking about the man whose amazing career would become the subject of my first book, "The Most Offending Soul Alive: Tom Harrison and his Remarkable Life" (University of Hawai'i Press, 1999). Tom, a gray-eyed heavyset man who favored rumpled shirts and shorts, had an arresting presence. Tom had lived in several outlandish places, including on a cannibal island in the South Pacific, and was very British, a graduate of Harrow and Cambridge whose accent was pure upper-class English and whose voice had a Richard Burton resonance.

During more than 20 years in Borneo, he had parachuted into

the island's center during World War II to raise a thousand-man guerrilla army of headhunters against the Japanese. He'd also found in a cave the oldest skull of modern man then known.

Like many diplomats and ex-diplomats, I had always wanted to write a book, and Tom proved a great subject. But I did not get started on the book until 1986, 10 years after Tom's death, when I was on leave without pay to be with John, then the chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in The Hague.

After that year, I put book-writing aside until 1992 when I had 20 years' service and could retire and begin writing full time. It still took me 12 years, four continents and 200 taped and transcribed interviews before the Harrison book was done. And that was the fun part!

Much less fun was trying to find an agent and publisher. I had almost given up when one day I heard from not one but two agents, one American and one British. I mistakenly chose the American; the United Kingdom would have been a better place to find a publisher for a book about a British eccentric. I, not my American agent, eventually found an American publisher, but only after I agreed to reduce my 1,100-page manuscript by more than half. The acquiring editor, I now see, should have made me cut it even more, but I am nonetheless very fond of my first full-fledged literary offspring. (A video drawn from the book is on YouTube.com. Search on "The Barefoot Anthropologist" and you'll find six 15-minute episodes of a BBC4 documentary presented by Sir David Attenborough, which I helped write.)

My second book, as I said, grew out of researching the first one. Leafing through a mountain of letters and notes to and from Tom at the War Memorial Library in Canberra, Australia, I found a letter written in perfect Palmer Method handwriting—clearly the product of someone who had gone to an American public school in the 1940s. The letter told of how 11 American airmen who parachuted into the middle of Borneo after the Japanese shot down their B-24 were rescued by natives who had been headhunters until the 1930s. These unlikely hosts were hiding the Yanks and killing—and taking the heads of—any Japanese soldiers who ventured upriver to find the airmen. The writer sought Major Harrison's help in arming the natives and getting the airmen back to their base.

Their story became "The Airmen and the Headhunters: A True Story of Lost Soldiers, Heroic Tribesmen and the Unlikeliest Rescue of World War II" (Harcourt, 2007). It also led to the TV documentary that reappears sometimes on PBS's "Secrets of the Dead" series. The Airmen book took 10 years of research and writing, including visits to three continents and 75 interviews. By pure luck, I found a great agent who promptly found a marvelous acquiring editor.

Since resuming full-time writing, I have led a double life. My other career, as a diplomat hired out of retirement, started in 1993 while I was writing the first book. A regional bureau of the State Department that had once employed me offered me a temporary refugee coordinator position in Croatia. I was busy then with book research but John, also a retired senior FSO, took the job and brought me and my laptop along.

From then until John's death in 2000, we often took tandem jobs in Europe or at State. Since then, I have worked (chiefly in Brussels) as "senior adviser to the Political Section" and in the Department, usually as a coordinator on the 24/7 Political-Military Action Team, writing on hot pol-mil topics for a twice-daily situation report for the Seventh Floor, POLAD offices and elsewhere. My work as a rehired diplomat has been as rewarding as any I have ever done.

I am now back to my own writing, preparing memoirs of 50 years in the diplomatic world. That book, a personal glimpse at diplomacy at the ground level, will (I hope) offer funny, sad and touching stories of a long, happy life spent mostly abroad. ■

The author, center, visits a classroom in 1992 at a U.S.-run refugee camp for 20,000 Indochinese boat people on the Bataan Peninsula. She was then the Department's refugee coordinator for the Philippines.

State Department photo

Obituaries



Fredric Buch, 91, a retired Foreign Service and Civil Service employee, died July 11. After emigrating from Germany, he served in the Army during World War II and joined Voice of America's German Service in 1952. He was an announcer, European correspondent, director of English worldwide news and head of news analysis and political commentary. After retiring in 1984, he created Springbrook Productions, an audio-visual production company. He volunteered with Meals-on-Wheels.



Bill Callihan, 81, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died Aug. 31 in Lakeland, Fla. He served in the Air Force before joining the Department as a communications officer. He was posted to Mexico City and Accra, and served as worldwide director for communications in Washington, D.C. He was devoted to his family, grandchildren and church.



Marjorie Coffin, 63, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 8 of ovarian cancer in Hagerstown, Md. She joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1975 and was posted to Japan, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Spain, Turkey, El Salvador and Mexico. She retired in 2007. She enjoyed singing in choruses and acting wherever she was posted. She traveled to every continent and enjoyed knitting and crocheting, donating most of her work to charity.



Richard Duncan, 72, a retired Foreign Service financial management specialist, died April 20 of complications from amyloidosis in Sarasota, Fla. He served in the Air Force before joining the Foreign Service in 1966. His postings included Chile, Uruguay, Finland, Brazil and Ghana. After retiring in 1998, he served as a rehired annuitant for several years, most recently in Amman in 2004. He enjoyed golf, fishing and Florida's beaches.



Pearl Rachlin Richardson, 85, wife of retired Foreign Service officer Cecil Richardson, died May 19 in Washington, D.C., after a brief illness. She accompanied her husband on all his overseas assignments and WAE postings. After retiring, they lived in Washington and enjoyed the rich cultural life of the area.



Nicholas Robertson, 62, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 25 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He lived in Arlington, Va. He joined the Foreign Service in 1978, and was posted to South Africa, Barbados, Argentina, Ghana, Nigeria and Venezuela. After retiring in 2002, he worked in Nigeria with residents, oil companies and the Nigerian government to clean up the polluted Niger River Delta.



James M. Shepard, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 17. He lived in Chico, Calif. He served in the military during the Korean War. During 22 years spent mostly as an agricultural adviser for the Department and USAID, he served in Ghana, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Addis Ababa and the Sinai, where he was a liaison officer between the Israeli and Egyptian militaries. After retiring in 1979, he moved to California and enjoyed cooking, bread-making, entertaining, his grandchildren and Monday Night Football.



Sean Patrick Smith, 34, a Foreign Service specialist, died Sept. 11 in the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya. He served in the Air Force for six years before joining the Department as an information management technical specialist. He later became an information management officer. His postings included Pretoria, Baghdad, Montreal and The Hague. He was devoted to his family and country.



Alfred Joseph Verrier, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 22 at his home in northern Virginia. He served in the Marine Corps before joining the Department as a diplomatic courier in 1955. His postings included Cairo, Athens, Frankfurt, Manila, Panama and Bangkok. After retiring in 1993, he pursued his lifelong love of history, music and reading.



David E. Warner, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 2 in Austin, Texas. He served in the Army in West Germany before joining the Department. He was posted to Indonesia, Bangladesh and Sudan. He also lived in Panama, Ecuador, Colombia and Argentina. He retired to Florida before moving to Austin in 2007. He enjoyed watching sports, playing the piano, poker, social events and family life. ■

Appointments

Edward M. Alford

U.S. Ambassador to
The Gambia



Alexander M. Laskaris

U.S. Ambassador
to Guinea



Jay N. Anania

U.S. Ambassador
to Suriname



Deborah R. Malac

U.S. Ambassador
to Liberia



Gene A. Cretz

U.S. Ambassador
to Ghana



Edward M. Alford (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia. Previously, he was consul general in Frankfurt. Before that, he was executive assistant to the Under Secretary for Management. Other postings include Manama, Dhaka, Leningrad, Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Windhoek, Rome, Moscow, Islamabad and Baghdad. He served in the Army. He is married and has three children.

Jay N. Anania (SFS) of Maryland is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname. Previously, he was management counselor in Baghdad. He has also been management counselor in Berlin and served at six other overseas posts. He was executive director for the bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs. He also served as the Department's acting chief information management officer. He is married and has two sons.

Thomas Hart Armbruster (SFS) of New York is the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Previously, he was diplomat in residence in New York City. He was consul general in Vladivostok and Nuevo Laredo and deputy chief of mission in Dushanbe. Other postings include Helsinki, Havana and Moscow. He was chief negotiator for an emergency response treaty with Russia. He is married and has two children.

Mark L. Asquino (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Previously, he was executive assistant in the Office of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights. He was deputy chief of mission in Sudan and Kazakhstan. Other postings include Caracas, Panama City, Madrid, Bucharest, Santiago and Tashkent.

Piper A.W. Campbell (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia. Previously, she was consul general in Basrah, Iraq, and chief of staff to the deputy secretary for Management and Resources. She has been deputy chief of mission in Cambodia and also served in the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in Geneva, Croatia (twice), Belgium and the Philippines.

Gene A. Cretz (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana. Previously, he was ambassador to Libya and a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He has been deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires in Damascus and DCM in Tel Aviv. Earlier postings include Islamabad, Damascus, New Delhi, Tel Aviv, Beijing and Cairo. He served in the Peace Corps in Afghanistan. He is married.

James B. Cunningham (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Previously, he was deputy ambassador. Before that, he was ambassador to Israel. He was consul general in Hong Kong and deputy U.S. permanent representative and acting permanent representative to the U.N. Other postings include



Marcie B. Ries
U.S. Ambassador
to Bulgaria



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Piper A.W. Campbell
U.S. Ambassador
to Mongolia



Michael A. Raynor
U.S. Ambassador
to Benin



James B. Cunningham
U.S. Ambassador
to Afghanistan



Mark L. Asquino
U.S. Ambassador
to Equatorial Guinea



Thomas H. Armbruster
U.S. Ambassador
to the Marshall Islands



David Bruce Wharton
U.S. Ambassador
to Zimbabwe



Stockholm, Rome (twice) and the U.S. Missions to NATO and the U.N. He is married and has two daughters.

Alexander Mark Laskaris (SFS) of Maryland is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea. Previously, he was consul general in Erbil, Iraq. Before that, he led the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Ninawa Province, Iraq. He was deputy chief of mission in Burundi and Kosovo, and also served in Liberia, Angola, Botswana and the U.S. Mission to the U.N.

Deborah R. Malac (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia. Previously, she was director of the Office of East Asian Affairs. Before that, she was director of the Mid-Level Division in the

Office of Career Development and Assignments. She was deputy chief of mission in Addis Ababa and also served in Dakar, Bangkok, Pretoria and Yaoundé. She is married and has three children.

Michael A. Raynor (SFS) of Maryland is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Benin. Previously, he was executive director of the Bureau of African Affairs. Before that, he was deputy executive director of the bureau. He served as management officer in Harare, Windhoek, Conakry and Djibouti, and was also posted to Brazzaville and Luxembourg. He is married and has two children.

Marcie B. Ries (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria. Previously, she was prin-

cipal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance. Before that, she was PDAS for European and Eurasian Affairs. She was ambassador to Albania and also served in Baghdad, Kosovo, London, Brussels, Turkey and the Dominican Republic. She is married to Ambassador Charles Ries (Ret.) and has two children.

David Bruce Wharton (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe. Previously, he was deputy assistant secretary for Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of African Affairs. Before that, he was director of the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the bureau. He was deputy chief of mission in Guatemala and also served in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. ■

End State



Nicaragua

A woman strolls past a colorful building in Granada, one of the country's largest and most culturally vibrant cities. Located along the western shores of Lake Cocibolca, the city is a popular tourist destination due to its abundance of well-preserved colonial-era architecture.

Photo by Elaine Faith



PG. 5





Belize

Stone temples and manicured plazas at Caracol, an ancient

Maya archaeological site in Belize's Cayo District, stand out in stark contrast to surrounding rainforest. Archeological surveys have found that Caracol once covered an area much larger than present day Belize City and supported more than twice the modern city's population.

Photo by Russell Harrison

PG. 18



DRC

The late afternoon sun casts long shadows as fishermen in a pirogue ply a placid stretch of the Congo River in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At 4,700 km (2,920 mi), The Congo is only the ninth longest river in the world. However, with measured depths in excess of 220 m (720 ft) it is the deepest by a wide margin.

UN photo by Marie Frechon

PG. 39



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France

Built as the grand centerpiece for the 1889 World's Fair, the Eiffel Tower was the world's tallest man-made structure for more than four decades. It retained its superlative status in France until the 343.0 m (1,125 ft) Millau Viaduct superseded it in 2004.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

PG. 23





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